



## JAKUB WOLMAN

Protocol of the witness hearing of Jakub Wolman by the Commission for the Investigation of German-Nazi Crimes in Oświęcim on 13 and 14 April 1945 in Kraków. Minister [of art and culture] Rzymowski is presiding. Witness Wolman, after swearing an oath, testifies as follows:

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Name and surname	Jakub Wolman
Names of parents	Abram and Cykora
Date of birth	13 July 1914
Profession	Doctor
Nationality	Jewish
Religious affiliation	Mosaic
Citizenship	Polish
Place of permanent residence before arrest	Bratislava, Czechoslovakia

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**Chairman:** Doctor, you may now present a general picture of your experience in the camp, or camps, that you have been through, including what you consider the most important and most characteristic of the German practices. So, to start with, under what conditions were you arrested and what happened to you afterwards?

**Witness:** From 1931 onwards I was studying in Czechoslovakia. In March of 1942, I found myself in Czechoslovakia, in a labor camp. In mid-April, a larger number of workers were taken from that camp, sent to a concentration site, and less than twenty days later the entire transport was sent to Auschwitz through Žylica, including myself.

I arrived in Auschwitz as part of a transport of a thousand people: children, women, and men.

**Prosecutor Pęchalcki:** How did you end up in the labor camp? Who placed you there and when?



**Witness:** I arrived there voluntarily. Cases of people volunteering for labor camps where they could earn a living were frequent, as living conditions in Slovakia at the time were very hard, particularly for Jews. The War found me in Slovakia – I have not been home since 1938. I left Poland in 1931 to study in Bratislava and I remained there, except for brief periods, until 1942. Transports of Jews from Slovakia began in March of 1942. There was talk of transports for work. At first, they only took young people.

**Chairman:** Did you know where you would be sent?

**Witness:** We did not know that. There was talk of work in Ukraine. The first transports were of young, unmarried girls.

**Chairman:** Of what nationality?

**Witness:** Only Jewish. Then they shipped out transports of young men. In early April, they began transports of whole families. By then there was no more talk of transports for work, but rather to colonize Ukraine, in the eastern frontier of Polish lands. The one interesting thing is that in all European countries where transports of Jews took place, the Gestapo spread the same fairy tale of colonization in some form. I would like to bring up Greece as a telling example. In Greece, people were not just told they were going to be colonists, but the German offices signed contracts with Jews. They were acts of sale. A man was sold land, a house, horses, a few cows, pigs, farming equipment and they had to pay for it all in gold drachmas. We have seen those contracts.

**Chairman:** Were those transactions voluntary?

**Witness:** Yes. If he did not make such a transaction, he would go without it. But that man thought to himself: if I am going to be a colonist, and I have property here, I would rather sell it, buy something there and start a new life.

**Chairman:** Where did you get this information about the Greeks? Did you encounter the victims of those transactions in Auschwitz?

**Witness:** Yes, the Greek arrivals were the people who had everything taken from them. They were given *lager* [camp] clothes and underwear, but all their private property was taken away. As for other things, they did not protest, but simply asked for that one document, the act of sale.



**Member of parliament Boguszewska:** Did the documents list the town where they were supposed to receive the property?

**Witness:** No. They were told: "You are going to Ukraine, and you will be settled in a place where there is land prepared and farm buildings abandoned by the peasants. They will allocate that to you, you will work there and colonize it." Today, when one sees such things in hindsight, one thinks they were foolish people who could not understand German perfidy.

**Chairman:** Your things were taken away right at the start?

**Witness:** Everything was taken. One has to remember that it was not 1945, we did not know the Germans so well back then. If I were in the place of that Greek, with my views on life, on humanity, how would I think of that? If I were told: "You are to be deported, you will take part in colonization here and there," if an official came to me and said they were giving me the chance to buy property where I was going to live in the future, backed with a document, I would think that there is some law, some justice. If he is an official, I have some reason to believe him. Nobody back then would think that such perfidy and such cynicism are possible.

**Chairman:** If there were Greeks who would sell the property, there had to be ones who would buy it.

**Witness:** You misunderstand. If one had a shop, or a house, or a workshop, one would sell it to buy land in Ukraine.

**Chairman:** So there were people who would buy that shop or house. Would one take the money with them?

**Witness:** No, one would pay the money to a German office in gold drachmas.

**Chairman:** And for that, they would receive that document they valued so highly?

**Witness:** Well, yes, because they thought it was a basis for their existence. Completely logical. The same thing happened in other countries in some form or another.

**Chairman:** Could you describe to us the circumstances of your arrival.

**Witness:** I would like to describe the daily life of a prisoner, how they arrived, how they worked, what their morning looked like, how every hour of their life looked, how they lived, how did they change.



**Chairman:** Please, begin right away.

**Witness:** A transport of a thousand people – children, women, men – arrived in 40 cargo rail carriages that had only straw in them.

**Chairman:** When did you arrive?

**Witness:** It was the so-called sixth Żylina transport. We left Żylina at 11.30 p.m. We were loaded onto the carriages and we travelled all night. We arrived at 1.30 p.m. the next day.

**Chairman:** What day was that?

**Witness:** We were loaded during the night from 28 to 29 April 1942, and we arrived in Auschwitz on 29 April between noon and 1.30 p.m. The door opened. The train had stopped. I looked out a window to see where we were and I saw a group of strange looking people. Old men, wearing striped clothes, with shovels, working quite quickly for men their age, with other people walking around near them, looking well, in *pasiaki* [prisoner uniforms], with sticks. Further on there were concrete posts and wires, and porcelain insulators on those posts. And then I understood where I was, because I had already known what a concentration camp was and what it looked like.

**Chairman:** What had you expected with regards to your destination?

**Witness:** We had thought we were going to Lublin.

**Chairman:** To Majdanek?

**Witness:** We did not know what Majdanek was, we were only told that land was being colonized around Lublin and that Jews would be settled there, that the other part of the transport would go to Ukraine. But we found out from the railway workers that the first transport of girls went not to Lublin, but to Auschwitz, that they were working in soap factories there and that they were well off. We were escorted by *Hlinks-Garda* [Hlinka Guard, a Slovak collaborationist militia] and handed over to the SS-men on the border. It was also there that we learned we were headed not for Lublin, but for Auschwitz.

**Prosecutor Pęchalski:** Did you know back then what Auschwitz was?

**Witness:** No, we did not know, that is, we knew there were factories there, and we were glad we were not [headed] for Lublin, as the word was that things were bad in Lublin.



After we left the carriages, SS-men appeared, shouting: "*Los, los, Bewegung*" [go, go, get moving] and started chasing people out of the carriages with sticks. And so, right from the first moment, began that atmosphere and that system that would surround us day and night from that moment on: *Los, los, Bewegung*. We were sorted right away. Women and children in one place, men in another. Before we had a chance to say goodbye, the women's group was already gone, and we went in another direction. When leaving, nobody knew where they were going and what for, but everyone hoped they were going there to stay and had taken whatever they could along with them. There were even rules as to what you had to take and how much of it as a minimum. Such and such clothes, and work clothes, and shoes for work, so that the people would be simply convinced that it was about work.

**Prosecutor Pęchalski:** There was no upper limit, only a minimum?

**Witness:** Yes, only a minimum. We go along a road and arrive at a huge gate, wires around it, and a sign on that gate: "*Arbeit macht Frei*." It encourages us, I am healthy, I am not afraid of work, I gain hope. The houses are built of brick, the people walking around them looked pretty well. We had arrived during the day, so the others were at work, and only the *lager* notables were left to walk around. That there were beatings, that they spoke with their batons, that was normal for the Gestapo and the SS – one did not think much about that, because this was part of the image of an SS-man we had learned when we were still outside. We arrive, they line us up. We approach one of the blocks. Each one of us was sent through the hallway of one of the blocks, they took all the packages and let us back out onto the street. One stood there now free of baggage, but dressed. One was somewhat surprised, but never mind, one had to wait. There were maybe a thousand people as well in front of the second block, and the third as well – it was a day of large transports.

**Chairman:** Were the tall, multi-story houses already there in the *lager*?

**Witness:** Yes, I would like to note that waiting and standing around in the *lager* was a very common thing. Afterwards, they got around to us, and so they took us in groups of 20-30 people to block 26, where we were stripped naked. Sorry, we stripped in front of the block. We received a bag and two number tokens: we put one in the bag and held the other in hand. We walk in. A barber shaves our hair. Then we wash. We were lucky, since the water was warm and it was very cold outside back then, although it was April, and we saw snow everywhere on the way from the train. After a hot shower, which only lasted a minute, we



were kicked out, naked and wet, and we had to stand and wait again until everyone was covered with oil. This is called the bath, disinfection, and delousing. From there [we went] to the second block, where everyone received long underwear, a shirt, and an old Russian summer uniform. It consisted of pants, a sweater, and a pair of wooden shoes. That was all.

**Chairman:** No hats?

**Witness:** Some of us received caps. We were thrown outside again and we wait. We sleep for two hours, shivering, we are literally jittery with cold. Then we enter the infirmary, where they note down the name and surname, and where everyone received tattoos. At that point they did not make the tattoos manually, but with a stamp. It was 9, maybe 10 p.m., in any case it had already been dark for a long while. We were taken to the basement of block 18. The basement was concrete and we spent the entire night in there.

**Chairman:** There was no possibility of a meal?

**Witness:** No, of course not. The next day we are again sitting in the basement, it is 10, 11, 12 o'clock. It was not until 12 o'clock that they brought us soup. We got a liter of that soup per person. But people were not hungry, just thirsty; it is understandable: when one arrives from freedom, they are not starved, moreover, they are nervous, so they do not feel hunger, just thirst, so people did not eat much of the soup, just a few spoons – figuratively speaking, as there were no spoons – we drank the soup from the bowls. I remember the windows looked out to the street. I look through a window and see a skeleton man approach, just skin and bones, the face of an old man, no longer human at all. There is some insanity in their eyes, some terror that cannot be described. He approaches the window and asks a man for soup, then goes to another one, and another, then I see a few more of them standing on the other side of the window. And suddenly I hear a voice: "What, have you come to steal, steal from a colleague?" It was a *blokowy* [block senior prisoner] shouting.

**Chairman:** What did the *blokowy* look like?

**Witness:** He looked well, he was elegantly dressed, I mean he was wearing striped clothes, but they were clean and elegantly ironed.

So the *blokowy* takes that "Muslim" – that was what we called people who looked like skeletons but could still stand.



**Chairman:** Have you ever learned where that name came from?

**Witness:** No, but I know they were also called that in other camps. Someone told me it was because Turkish saints were very skinny. The *blokowy* shouts: "You cannot steal from colleagues. I'm gonna teach you now. You'll get 25 [lashes] as an example." And he did get 25 indeed. It was just like shooting him, as the man did not survive it.

**Prosecutor Pęchalski:** At that point were you still convinced you would be those colonizers?

**Witness:** At that point one did not think at all. Do not think about what we could have been experiencing, try to feel it for yourself.

**Chairman:** Please continue with your story.

**Witness:** In the afternoon, after the meal, we were taken outside to the yard. A tall, red-headed SS-man with a fairly pleasant voice arrived and asked who would volunteer for hard labor. Anyone healthy, young, and feeling strong enough [would go] for hard labor, those who could not handle it would go to the camp, where the work was lighter. By then I had already learned that with the Germans you always had to volunteer for the worst, because when a German wanted to give somebody some relief, they only knew one way to do that. I volunteered alongside some young people who had also instantly realized that.

**Chairman:** Did most people volunteer for hard labor?

**Witness:** A large percentage. The other group was made up of the really sick and elderly. When we lined up, we were asked two questions: "How old are you and what is your profession?" "What? Carpenter" – and boom, a punch to the face, but without anger, as if he was saying "good morning" or "thank you". To the other: "Profession?" "Accountant." And a punch to the face again. And so it went, one after another. We stood until 4 or 5 p.m. Then they took us downstairs and lined us for a roll call. I look and see the living lined up in fives, and next to them dead bodies also being lined up in fives. After the roll call we returned to the room and ate dinner. The room had some 90 beds, which had to be enough for 250 people. Everyone wants to go to sleep, to rest, to gather their thoughts, to comprehend everything that transpired. But no! The *sztubowy* [room senior prisoner] starts calling: "Zugangs!" [Arrivals!] Everyone bullies the "Zugangs:" the *sztubowi*, the SS-men, the *kapos* [prisoners in charge of a work detail], even an older prisoner who has been there longer. Only



then did they write down the names and numbers, gave us information and explanations, and the next day they woke us up at 3.30. That was the specialty of block 18, as we later learned. It was the Buna block, meaning that the prisoners who were there would go to Buna [Buna Werke, a factory near Auschwitz] every day and thus had to get up so early.

**Chairman:** You had told them you were a doctor, so they knew about it and did not pay attention to it?

**Witness:** No. So, some 200 people stayed, as a labor reserve for Buna, while we were taken for different work, near the camp, doing *Abbruch*, that is, demolishing houses that had to be removed to make space for camp expansion. The working conditions were disastrous – not even because of the people, but because of the work itself. The wall being demolished would fall on the workers. We were constantly being hurried along and we knew that if we would stop working for a moment or fail to pass something as quickly as we were told to, we would be hit with a baton in that same moment.

We worked until lunch: for lunch everyone received a liter of soup and then they went back to work. In the evening we were given dinner and we went to sleep. At 3.30 a.m. we were woken up by the voice of the block clerk: "Get up!" And the beatings began. Anyone who did not immediately get up was beaten, those who went to wash themselves were beaten, those who did not go wash themselves were beaten. When we went to work, we were beaten to hurry us up. At work we would be free of the *sztubowy*, in his place would be the *Vorarbeiter* [lead worker], who did not spare us lashes either. The work was very hard, it was the most terrifying thing in the camp, we lost weight daily, we were so exhausted with work we only expected to survive the next few days. We were being robbed, they would not give us the whole liter of soup, [they] cut our bread rations and bread supplements. We could not drink water, as it caused diarrhea, which spelled death. There was plumbing in Auschwitz and every block had running water, but drinking it was forbidden, as it contained bacteria. If a functional prisoner was a decent man, he did not allow us to drink that water and beat us, knowing that it would mean death. Other functionals did not care if a prisoner drank it or not. A few days later I ended up in the so-called *Kiesgrube* [gravel pits]. They were mostly worked by the *Strafkommando* penal detail, housed in block 11. Chosen members of the *Strafkommando* were our *Vorarbeiter*s. Prisoners sentenced to the *Strafkommando* died a lot faster than in the camp. In a penal detail you were not allowed to do anything, you were given beatings for everything, you were only allowed to die.





In early April of 1942, Jews appeared in the camp for the first time. Up until that point all Jews were immediately inducted into the *Strafkommando* in block 11. They would survive there for two, three days at most. If they lived for five days, it was a record. So when, in early April, as I said, we appeared in the camp, there was great wonder as to where we had come from. We could then count on three-four weeks of survival.

In the camp, people died from a lack of food, from infections, beatings, diarrhea, and the body's immune system growing weaker by the hour. Already after two weeks a prisoner gained a unique look with a special facial expression, and their eyes displayed insanity and terror.

One time, after we were done working, we returned to the block and lined up for the roll call. Gunshots ring out. After the roll call was over, curious, although exhausted, I approached the wires, and I saw a prisoner grasping the wires, being tossed about by the electricity for a long while. Shots were ringing out from the watch posts and, after a while, he hung there on the wires, hit.

In 1944, I had the opportunity to see a patient in the hospital who had been burned on a wire. He wanted to pass bread from the men's camp to the women's section, but, startled by a shot, he touched the wire. It was during the day, the current was not strong and the other prisoners, seeing it happen, threw sand on him and then used a plank to separate him from the wire. He ended up in the hospital and said that when he was gripped by the electricity, he fainted and had no idea what was happening to him.

In the evenings and mornings we would constantly hear gunshots fired at people who were committing suicide in that way, by wire. I worked in the *Kiesgrube* for ten days. One Sunday, everyone was called in and most were assigned to the *Buna kommando*, housed in Block 18. (Buna was a group of factories [located] six kilometers from the camp which processed synthetic rubber.)

At 3 a.m. in the morning we were woken up and formed into groups of a hundred through constant beatings. A *kommando* consisted of 15 to 18 hundred people. We marched for some ten minutes to a ramp, on the other side of which stood cattle cars. We were packed 120 to a car, and I must point out that a quarter of the car had to remain empty for the *kapos* and *Vorarbeiter*s. The trip took some 15-20 minutes, after which every *kommando*



went to its designated work area. At first I worked at digging foundations; we were watched by a *kapo*, a *Vorarbeiter*, and sentries. Every 20 [people] had two sentries [posts] and an overseer, a German civilian. Everyone wanted us to work as fast as possible: the overseer because the company was paying for every prisoner, and the SS-men for the usual reasons. There were days when we had good sentries. They were lazy people who did not feel like watching us for the entire day. After some time we learned which ones were good and which ones were bad. But when an overseer noticed that a sentry was not pushing us, all it took to convince him to drive us was a few cigarettes. Sometimes bored sentries invented "games," for example one time a sentry called over a prisoner and whacked him in the fingers with a rod. Luckily for the prisoner he was not injured, as that would be a death sentence: if a wound festered, you were sent to the infirmary, and from there to the gas.

One day I was ordered, along with another prisoner, my colleague, to dig a hole four cubic meters large. After half the work was already done, a sentry approached us and told us to finish the job in 20 minutes. We saw it was impossible, but we started working even faster, hoping that maybe we could manage it. We could clearly see that the sentry found our urgency funny: he extended our deadline another few minutes, and eventually gave us a beating with a stick. Luckily, it was right at the end of the working day and we had to go back to the blocks. The sentry could not do anything about that, as he had orders to bring us back on time.

Another time a sentry called over one of the prisoners who was working and took him behind a barrack. We heard a shot, after which the sentry calmly came back and spoke to the *kapo*. Then he called over another [prisoner], told him to grab a bucket and go bring water. The water was beyond a line we were not allowed to cross. Once the prisoner had crossed the line, the sentry shot him. When he ordered another prisoner to go get water and the man refused, he shot him as well. At first we did not know why they were killing people. Later we learned that every SS man received 60 Reichsmarks as a reward after shooting a fleeing prisoner.

I saw all that and at the same time I felt that we were getting worse by the hour, that we were wasting our bodies and our strength away. After work was roll call, and then we headed for the cars. In the morning we travelled 20 minutes to work, the same way back to camp took two or three hours. As military transports used that same track, we often had to wait



a long time, while in the morning, on our way to work, we had the right of way. The doors and windows of the cars were locked. There was no air to breathe, and this devastated people even more than all the work.

So we got dinner. They beat us again when handing out bread. I remember that one time there was a single portion left on the table after the bread had been distributed. The *sztubowy* asks: "Who did not take their bread?" Nobody answers. Eventually, after half an hour, they figured out who had not taken their bread. He had done this out of fear – although he was so hungry, he preferred not to come to the table so as not to risk being beaten. Naturally, he was later beaten again for not taking bread.

Please, try to imagine the bathing block for a thousand people. A man went to bed unwashed, so we got up in the middle of the night, although it was not allowed, to wash ourselves.

**Chairman:** Were you shaven or not?

**Witness:** We were shaved once a week.

One day the *sztubowy* comes in and says that the beds were not made, that the *blokowy* was there and was making a ruckus about it. And just because one or two beds were not made, we were ordered to do squats, and then we were all told to get under the beds. Please imagine that a three-level bunk bed usually served eight people. The beds were placed next to each other, meaning that 16 people had to fit under the two bottom level beds. Anything that stuck out – an arm, a leg, a head – was stomped on. And this would go on for an hour, sometimes two. Eventually we went to bed. It is hard to fit three people in a bed like that. Very hard. People are tired, very agitated, any little thing that one normally pays no attention to causes people to cross swords, pick an argument – like rabid dogs, simply put. It was they who turned these people into animals – not just animals, but rabid animals. You are lying in your bed, suddenly: "Achtung!" An SS-man comes in, drunk, of course, and screams: "Alles raus!" [Everyone move!] A hallway runs the entire length of the block. The man stops halfway through the hall, holds out a baton and everyone [has to] run from one corner to the other – there and back again – and anyone approaching must go past him, and gets a blow wherever it lands, in the face, the head, the back. This goes on for half an hour, an hour – until the SS man gets tired. And then you get up at 3 a.m. again and it's another terrible day like that.



Evening is a concerto of gunshots, same with the morning. I remember that after a week our room of 250 people was reduced to 150 survivors. You have to multiply this by the number of rooms and blocks. Out of every 250 people, a hundred or so died every week. But it was not a problem, as transports kept coming in all the time and the casualties were constantly being replaced.

A week passes. Sunday. Buna does not go to work on Sundays. Sunday is the worst day of the week. Wake up in the morning, make the bed, coffee. I said that bread was issued every day, but on Saturday evenings they issued it for both Saturday and Sunday morning. On Sunday evenings and Monday mornings there was no bread, not until Monday evening, so Sunday was the hungriest day. Normally, the order of the day on a Sunday was that we had to get ourselves in shape before noon, that is, shave, get our hair cut, fix our clothes. There were around a thousand people in the block. We all stood in line in the basement and waited for the barbers. In fact there was only one barber, but sometimes there was an announcement that another one was needed and someone volunteered, whether they knew how to do it or not, because they could get soup for it as a reward. On Sundays, the roll call was held at noon. A roll call at 12 o'clock would usually be brief, as afterwards was the so-called *Lauseappel* [lice roll call]. Nurses and doctors from the hospital would arrive and check every shirt. There were thousands of lice. If you reached under your shirt, you would pull out a handful. Washing did not help, picking them out did not help, as the blankets were full of lice. But the nurse could not find any bugs and, interestingly, he usually would not find any at all. Not that they weren't looking for them – but before the medical personnel reached a prisoner, he would kill his lice, even if there were 500 of them. And if they found one that had managed to hide, they wrote down the prisoner's number, and then there were beatings and squats. And the lice lived just fine anyway, they were not afraid of this, but the end result was that the next Sunday that same prisoner would search more meticulously and the nurse would not find any lice on him.

Lunch was to be served after roll call. We were checked to see if we were shaved, washed, if our clothes were whole, if the number was sewn on right. They see a number torn off a little – a smack. "You will not get lunch." He says to another one: "Your head is not clean, go wash yourself again." And he gets no lunch, either. And so lunch takes three hours. But how do we sew? What do we repair our clothes with? The room had three needles and a little thread for 250 people. Eventually, we would get lunch. Between 1 and 3 p.m. on Sundays was the



so-called *Bettruhe* [rest in bed]. Afterwards we had to make our beds again, and there were more beatings. Usually there were two-three hours of calm in the afternoon, one could walk around the camp, talk to colleagues, enjoy fresh air and rest. Some *kommandos* worked all day on Sundays, some half a day, some not at all. Buna did not work on Sundays.

I remember how one Sunday we were thrown out of the block: "Buna antraten" [Buna is leaving]. I knew there was something fishy going on. Buna, going to work, on a Sunday, before noon? Something was wrong. They have us go down to the basement, where we found a few thousand stools without back supports. Everyone had to take five of them and carry them to Birkenau, three kilometers away, on the double! Five stools – that is not very heavy, but to take them and hold them for an extended period is very hard. I did not like that. And the art of the *lager* is to get out of work, so I lined up with the sick people going to the infirmary. It was dangerous, as when there were too many sick people, the *Lagerkapo* [camp *kapo*] would come with a stick and scatter them. So I stood before the infirmary. Once the ranks of the patients started to thin out a little, as some had already gotten in, the *kapo* and the *blokowi* started circling around us. Well, I have to get away. I walk up to where the band was, that is, by block 24. But there are some *kaapos*, a *sztubowy* and a *blokowy* – too risky – I'm thinking I have to get back to my own block. I will stash myself in there somehow. I approach the block, and a *blokowy* is standing in front of it. He can tell from my number which block I am from, and he says that Buna has left for work, and he wants to write down my number. But then he saw another man who also did not go [to work], so he stopped him – I took advantage of the commotion to get away. In the block I pretend I am busy sorting underwear. I have to add that every Sunday we would receive fresh underwear, that is, for 250 people we received 10-20 sets [of underwear], a few pairs of shoes, a few sets of clothes. They went to the people who did favors for the *sztubowy*. At that moment I hear the door open and the *blokowy* asks what am I doing here. So even though I was employed at something, he did not assume that I had run from another job. Marches to Birkenau were known for the fact that one would not come back from them. If someone carried five stools, sooner or later they had to drop one, or one would slip. And when he would bend over to pick it up, or to fix it, an SS man would shoot.

Another Sunday. Also a day of rest. We come back from work from Buna on Saturday evening and we consider it great luck to be in the camp so early – just past 5 p.m. Our train ride was shorter, so there was much joy at the thought that we would have a little more time to wash



and get some sleep. We arrive, but it turns out the roll call in the *lager* is still ongoing, so we are told to form up for the roll call as well. We think: we already had a roll call over there, so we don't do such a great job of lining up. For that, on Sunday morning we were taken to the field at 7 a.m., lined up squatting, and we were made to stay like that for five hours. And we did actually squat like that for five hours, until the roll call, and then again for the roll call. That was what that other Sunday looked like. And there were many such Sundays.

Here is why Sunday was the worst day: on a regular working day I knew what was in store for me – hard work, beatings, a train ride, but in the evening I would come back and go to bed; in other words, a working day did not have the same kind of surprises for me that a Sunday would bring. I worked in Buna for five weeks.

One more thing has to be mentioned – a prisoner would lose weight every day, causing their legs to swell.

**Chairman:** How many weeks did it take for a man to become a “Muslim?”

**Witness:** In 1942, the process took up to three weeks.

**Chairman:** Did you reach that state?

**Witness:** Yes.

**Chairman:** Did you receive any packages from outside the camp?

**Witness:** No, we were not allowed to receive packages. People were afraid to go to the hospital. I will say why later. If someone was sick, or wounded, or had swollen legs, the *kapo* took them to the hospital. People did not want that, as it was a death sentence. Diarrhea was terrible, both caused by hunger and by infections. But try to imagine that a prisoner with diarrhea would defecate 15, 20, 30 times a day. A sick prisoner would be in a rail car, ride for three hours, and could not hold in their stool for even five minutes. Please imagine that a prisoner stood at roll call for three or even four hours or more. They were not allowed to move, and if they soiled their trousers or underwear and stank, they were beaten again. Roll call. We are standing for the roll call. A normal scene – then suddenly one man starts to waver. People worked, they walked literally until their last atom of energy was used, and then they would break down, fall down, and never get up again, like a noble horse that runs until the last minute, until its heart gives out. The secret of this endurance was the constant



fear: fear of an SS man, of a *blokowy*, of another, stronger prisoner. From this it followed that a man would walk around, work, do everything literally until the last second. There was no rebellion. There was no spirit of rebellion. Everyone was completely broken and passive.

After a few days in the camp I got to know our *sztubowy*. He was one of the so-called decent *sztubowi*, because he beat prisoners without damaging them. To hit someone in the face, even with a fist, was normal, what was bad was if a *sztubowy* beat prisoners to kill them. This one was a young boy, maybe 17 or 18 years old, and he was impressed with my being a doctor. We spoke a few times and one time I asked him why prisoners murdered prisoners. When I arrived in the camp, I thought I would find a spirit of solidarity, that one prisoner would help another, that they would find a common front against the SS men. He said to me: "If you want to live in Auschwitz, you have to murder a hundred others. Then you have the right to live, as only those who have murdered others get good jobs and have the right to live." Although later it turned out that very few of the best killers were left. But I will speak about that later. In any case, the rule of the camp was: murder others for your own survival. The SS men not only killed and destroyed with their own hands, they also knew how to teach prisoners to kill one another.

**Chairman:** What was the obligation to oppress other prisoners like? Would an overseer be forced to do so, or did they have a margin of freedom?

**Witness:** It was like this. Say a hundred prisoners work. During the day they have to do their work. There are three options: either they meet their quota, or do less, or do more. The rule was: you have to work all the time, you cannot rest even for a moment. The SS men were constantly present when we worked. However, if the prisoners did less than they were supposed to, it was the fault of the *kapo* and *Vorarbeiter*, and it was they who were flogged or stripped of their *binda*, that is, the armband indicating their function. If they met the quota, the SS men were happy, if they did more, the *kapo* was commended. That strengthened his standing. If he were to say a good word to a prisoner, he would be sacked from his job. So he had to shout, but he did not have to beat; he could beat, but he did not have to murder. But he did murder, he extracted even more, to be more certain of his fate. In this atmosphere of murder they made murderers of the prisoners themselves. We cannot forget that numbers 1 through 30 in the first transport were German criminals; they arrived as *kapos* and it was they who started that school of murder, under orders from the SS men.





**Chairman:** Were the overseers also doomed, or did they have a chance to survive?

**Witness:** They had a chance. They were not hungry, as they stole from prisoners, they did not need to work, so they did not exhaust themselves, they were well dressed, they had the possibility of bathing. The *blokowi* and the *kapos* lived at the cost of hundreds and thousands of other prisoners.

I shall sketch another picture: We come back from work at Buna, a man is tired and knows he is looking at another three-hour return trip in a rail car. The *kapo* tells us to sing. We sang. But someone did not sing very well. And as a punishment, in that rail car, where there was no space to stand, where a man was left utterly drenched with sweat, as if he had bathed, the *kapo* had us squat. And we actually travelled in that position. The worst days were the rainy days. Rainy days had the most suicides. Try to imagine: a famished, weak, poorly dressed man. It starts to rain. You are standing in that rain, standing for ten hours, and it rains constantly, you are completely wet, your shirt is sticking to your back, it is cold, wet dirt sticks to the shovel, the wet shovel slips in your hands. So people broke down, threw away their shovels and went off to get themselves shot.

**Chairman:** Were there cases of mass suicides?

**Witness:** Yes, in 1942 it became so bad that the *Oberkapo* [senior *kapo*] of Buna went to all the blocks and rooms and said "It is going to be good now, you will not be beaten, you will get more to eat; do not go to the wires, don't walk away from work, don't get yourselves shot." But we were very suspicious, and therefore after a scene like that we were worried that something bad would follow. But nothing worse happened, nor did anything better—everything stayed the way it was.

The worst thing was that everyone was always alone in that mass. The faces changed so quickly, and people died so quickly, that there was no way to grasp a face and learn it. Dead bodies at work, dead bodies in the block in the morning.

To illustrate the pace of the work, I shall describe the effects of one workday. I remember that our group consisted of seven prisoners, almost all of them complete "Muslims." Over a period of eight hours we dug up, loaded, and unloaded 16 trucks [of dirt], carried it 60 meters uphill, unloaded 350 to 450 kilograms of cement bags and unloaded 6,000 bricks. All that with just seven people! Exhausted, hungry, tired, and constantly beaten. For it was





never enough, however much we did. Moreover, there was another thing. We were terribly thirsty. There was nothing to drink. There was no water available at the workplace, and it was summer – May, June, July. In the mornings we shivered with cold, waiting to leave for work, during the noon it was so hot we could not breathe. And the terrible thirst. In the morning we were supposed to get half a liter of coffee, but more often than not we wouldn't receive it. Same thing in the evening. The thirst was often worse than the hunger. And those who drank water died shortly after. In a word: whatever you did or whatever you did not do, you had to die, and die quickly. We lived, we worked, we slept next to dead bodies. One night I was woken up because someone had hanged himself. We cut him down and he was still alive. In the morning the *sztubowy* calls me and says: "You saved that one man during the night, the one who hanged himself." "Yes, I saved him. It was my duty." And the *sztubowy* says to that: "Do you know that if I made a report on you, you would get 25 [lashes]?" Since we knew each other, it never went past that.

After 7 p.m. it was already past roll call, and prisoners could go to the infirmary. But Buna would come back so late that we could never go to the infirmary, as it was already time to go to sleep. Those who were sick had no chance to get treatment, they could not go to the infirmary. How did the prisoners handle diarrhea? If they were fortunate enough to work where campfires had been burned, they chopped wood, burned it to charcoal and ate that charcoal. The normal course of self-medication was not to eat. But if someone starved himself for two days and ate nothing, and then ate charcoal, those two days had already exhausted him so badly that he had no chance to recover.

After five weeks of working in Buna, suddenly they went around all the blocks, writing down the names of doctors and nurses. As the *sztubowy* knew me, he wrote me down as well. We did not go to work, we were presented to the German camp doctor and a number of us were accepted.

**Prosecutor Pęchalcki:** Into the camp itself?

**Witness:** Into the camp itself. It was a hospital for prisoners. Before I move on to the next part, which I shall call the hospital part, I would like to mention further a few details.

When I was in the *Kiesgrube*, one [man] escaped. (There were cases in Auschwitz of individual prisoners escaping.) When we returned to the camp for roll call, they started



looking for him and for as long as they searched, we had to stand in the square. 7 o'clock, 8 o'clock, 9 o'clock, 10 o'clock, 11 o'clock, 12 o'clock. They only let us back into the blocks around 1 o'clock. There were cases of people standing in roll call for 36 hours when someone escaped. As the escapes became more and more frequent – even though the man escaping had very little chance of success – it got to the point where it was announced that if someone runs away from a *kommando*, the entire *kommando* answers for them. I recall a situation where someone escaped from one *kommando*. The *kommando* was 40 men strong. The entire *kommando* was brought to the camp and from the gate all the way to block 11 they had to “roll,” that is, roll on the ground, and so they went through the entire *lager*. A road was being constructed in front of block 11 at the time, the place was full of rocks and gravel, and an SS man kept them there for an hour. They had to roll back and forth there, and then they went to the bunker. Aside from the regular beating of prisoners, murders, shootings, there were also special cases: those *kapos* who had literally stopped being human from the shedding of others' blood. They simply developed a taste for crime, for abuse. There was one *kapo*, a roofer (*Dachdecker*), who threw two or three people from his *kommando* off a roof every day. There was another who had people climb tall trees and jump off them.

When a road was being built in the camp, after all the rocks and gravel were put in place, they had to be pressed together with a roller. I'm sure you've seen that kind of roller, normally moved with an engine. Here, the roller was dragged by people. The *kommando* was around one hundred people strong. Out of that hundred, 60 died every day. This was all because of the *kapo*.

**Prosecutor Pęchalcki:** How so? Did he treat them badly?

**Witness:** Very badly. He did them in. Priests were also heavily abused. There were a lot of victims among them.

**Prosecutor Pęchalcki:** Regardless of whether they were Catholic or Protestant?

**Witness:** Regardless. When you enter the camp, there is a sign: “*Arbeit macht Frei*.” Then there is a street with five [sic] sculptures: An SS man guiding a priest, a Jew, and a fat civilian man.

**Prosecutor Pęchalcki:** Does everything you say apply to 1942?



**Witness:** It applies to 1942, 1943, and 1944 – it was the same all along. The difference was that if at first selections were held once a week, later on it was done once every two or three weeks. There was a *kommando* named *Holzhof* [wood warehouse]. Work there was lighter than with wood or planks. The older or weaker people went to the *Holzhof*. A very “polite” German rule. During the selections, every other *kommando* coming back from work was inspected. Everyone stripped partially and they performed an inspection: if someone was skinny, weak, or had wounds on their legs, they would be taken to the gas. If a German helped a prisoner with something – why, not even helped, just eased his hardship – then that was a road leading to the gas. *Holzhof* was not inspected, they all went to the gas.

A special chapter was the camp band, made up of prisoners, a brass band playing in the mornings and evenings, when we left for work and came back from work. We came back with the dead bodies. The bodies had to be brought back with us. We went to work and came back in fives. If there was a dead body, four took it on their backs and there was a countable five again. We came back to the sounds of the band playing various beautiful tunes, such as “How Happy Life Is” [“*Jakie życie jest wesole*”]. Bodies were laid out for the roll call. At first, when the transports were coming back, there were not that many dead bodies. In the first week, for example, there were two, then ten, then 40 and so it went. Already by 1943 there were only three survivors from my transport, that is, out of a thousand people. I only learned that in 1943. As for numbers, the system in place is best illustrated by the fact that from the numbers 1 to 200,000, only 2,000 people were alive in 1944. That remaining fraction only survived because they had good jobs.

And so, I got into the hospital. And that was the first day when I started forming the belief that maybe I would survive after all. The job I was to have now was connected to what I remembered from when I was free. And a man might think that there, in the hospital, they would start being human again.

**Member of parliament Boguszewska:** When did you get into the hospital?

**Witness:** It was at the end of June of 1942. I arrived at the hospital, they changed my clothes, bathed me, I received an outfit of white canvas, patched up in many places, but clean. I was brought to work. And what did I see? It turned out that the hospital is another link in the chain of destroying people in the *lager*, just under a different pretense. It turned out that the same relations that existed between the prisoners in the camp were also there



in the hospital. (I am not talking about the patients, but of the people who worked in the hospital: doctors and nurses.)

**Prosecutor Pęchalski:** Were you assigned there as a doctor?

**Witness:** One moment. Those people were obviously afraid for their jobs. They were scared they might lose them. So on the one hand they did all they could to curry favor with the SS men, and on the other they tried to destroy any competition that could push them out of those jobs. When I arrived in the hospital, there were very few doctors. There were mostly nurses, especially ones that had never before had anything to do with that profession, but after learning something here they thought themselves great professors. It was like this in the *lager*: If there was a chance to get work indoors, everyone could do anything. For example, a carpenter was wanted. It was indoor work, so everyone volunteered. A cobbler was wanted – indoor work, so again there were people who said they were cobblers, even if they only had a very faint idea of it. But if they got into the workshop and were lucky enough to find a decent man to help them, they pretended to be cobblers or carpenters, learned the trade, and lived.

**Prosecutor Pęchalski:** Was it possible for you to receive newspapers?

**Witness:** German newspapers were brought to the camp. The right to subscribe was restricted to Aryans other than Russians. You could only subscribe if you had money, that is, if you had your own account. We could receive money from home, paid out at the rate of at first 10, then 20, then 40 Reichsmarks a month in the form of vouchers, and you could use that to pay for newspaper subscriptions. The vouchers could buy cigarettes, tobacco, sparkling water, toilet paper in the canteen. As far as food goes, only various beetroot salads were available. But you only ate those salads once, never again. The salads were rotten and people got diarrheas from them. The prices were horrendous, a bottle of mineral water cost half a Reichsmark, [we had to pay] 20 pfennigs for the water and 30 for the bottle.

**Prosecutor Pęchalski:** Let us return to the period when you arrived at the hospital, as this was a digression.

**Witness:** The Germans would not acknowledge a prisoner doctor. I was given the title of *Pfleger* [nurse]. I managed to immediately get assigned to a *sztuba*. In a huge hospital ward, which housed on average 250 to 350 sick prisoners, there were three-level beds, with two



to four patients in each. The room was divided into four parts. Each of those parts was called a *sztuba*. The duties of a *Pfleger* were as follows: in the morning we got up before the gong – in summer, the gong would ring at 4.30. There was no bathroom in block 21. We had to march all the patients to the bath in nothing but their long underwear, both in summer and in winter, as the bathrooms were in another block. We received no towels, the patients, some with a high fever, had to go back to the ward wet. After the bath, I swept the floor of the *sztuba*, I cleaned the stone floor until it shined, I made the beds, I took the buckets out all day, covering them with chlorine, because there were no toilets in the block. I had to clean and wash the windows. The ward had to maintain German standards of order. Not even a single straw could be under the beds. The pallets were old, there was no hay in them, just chopped up straws that fell out onto the floor whenever a sick patient moved. The sheets were not changed for months. They were covered in pus, blood, excretions, there were lice, fleas – but the floor had to be clean.

Then I went to get the coffee. We had to hand out breakfast. Soon after, wound dressing would begin. It took place twice a week between 8 a.m. and noon in the infirmary located in the room. All the cases there were difficult. We dressed 300-350 patients with eight to ten of us. Some of these had only learned to dress wounds in the hospital. Some of them worked well and they were decent people, but if you had to dress the wounds of 350 people in four hours, then you can imagine what it looked like.

At noon we went to bring lunch; we had to carry hundred-liter barrels of soup up a floor and distribute their contents.

If a straw made its way under the bed again, it was terrible. We had to stand and sweep all day. All *Pflegers* other than chief doctors had to do those jobs, carry soup barrels, after dinner bring bread on a tray that had 150 loaves with just two people to carry it. At the time I had a bad leg, swollen in the shin from being hit with a shovel at a work *kommando*. I was not allowed to lie down, I had to work, or they could kick me out to the *lager*. We were competition to the others, as we were doctors. Once we handed out the bread, we would go bring coffee for dinner and we had to constantly clean up. Everything proceeded accompanied by screams, beatings, and haste, just like in the *lager*. But the beatings were not as brutal as in the *lager*, instead they wanted to destroy us morally. The roll call, very short, as it only lasted five minutes, was held in the block, not in the square. In the evening



there was another roll call, afterwards we were taken to work loading bodies into block 28. The morgue was in block 28. There were 150 to 250 dead bodies there every day. It was the so-called natural fatality rate of the *lager*. We loaded the bodies on a car or cart that then took them to a crematorium. Two men grabbed a body, one by the arms, one by the legs, swung it and threw it onto the cart. In the crematorium everyone received a string, tied it to a dead man's arm and dragged the body across the stone floor. The bodies were laid out in a row and burned there.

We were also often taken during the day to unload rail cars full of bandages, lignin, and chlorine.

As Buna did not go for wound dressings, two *Pfleger*s had to work there. When the prisoners went to work, the bandages would tear off after two hours and they would have to work with open wounds. The worst were the leg wounds, they cost thousands of human lives. A fever had to be written down, the medication noted, all in a beautiful, legible handwriting, the record had to be clean, just like the floor. The patient was irrelevant.

This is what a *Pfleger*'s workday looked like, more or less.

In theory, someone could stay in the hospital until they recovered; in practice, however, it was different. Every week, on Monday, an SS doctor or nurse arrived, the SS man in charge of the block. All the patients had to get up, strip naked, every one of them received their medical record and approached the doctor, who took the records and put them on the table, some on one side, others on the other side. It was a selection. It took place on Mondays. They took people to the gas on Thursdays and Fridays. As I later learned, the list of candidates for gassing was sent to Berlin for approval. The sick going to the gas were dressed, they received shoes, the splints put on those suffering from major abscesses were removed. They were loaded onto carts like herrings in a barrel. The carts had devices for raising the platform so that the people could be dumped alive into the crematorium, breaking their arms and legs.

**Prosecutor Pęchalski:** Is it true that the sick from Buna were only kept in the hospital for 14 days and then gassed?

**Witness:** I do not know about the 14 days, however it was only a matter of time before one ended up in the gas chamber. New prisoners, called "young numbers" [*młode numery*] or "millioners" [*milionowcy*], did not know and did not believe they were going to the gas.



People turned to me with questions. One newly arrived prisoner told me that when he was brought to Auschwitz, he was told he could see his wife, who was also in the camp. He had not been granted a meeting yet and he asked me if it was true. I could not answer him that she had been gassed, but I told him that there were no meetings and he should not wait. Soon, the man was also taken to the gas during a selection.

If someone had a broken arm and received a splint, during selection they were marked as useless, to be gassed.

The gassings took place in Birkenau. Sometimes the *Lagerarzt SS* [SS camp doctor] received an order to send 600 people from the hospital to fill up a chamber. The doctor went around the blocks and picked 150 people from each. If they took a hundred people from the hospital, then the death certificates were written in one day, if more than a hundred, they were split up: for example they took 200 people one day, and the patient count was 2150, then the next day they wrote down 2100, until it evened out. The medical records of the people chosen for the gas were marked with "SB" (*Sonderbehandlung* [special treatment]); the office records usually said "heart attack." The people taken during a selection were marked as "*uberstellt nach Birkenau*" [transferred to Birkenau].

In July of 1942, I went to block 18 and I saw all new faces and numbers. Two days before, the old prisoners, "Muslims," had still been there. It turned out that some 500 of the weakest prisoners were taken from that block, put in the basement of block 18, and kept there for around two weeks. They received no bread. Some soup, occasionally something to drink. After two weeks only thirty-odd prisoners managed to leave the basement under their own steam, and these died after a few days as well. It was said that they were unfit for work, and the *blokowy* and SS made a great deal out of it, as they were receiving their rations for the entire two weeks. Even in the hospital, deaths were reported two days after the fact to take advantage of the extra ration.

Patients were beaten daily. The Germans said that a strong [prisoner] had the right to live for two months – if they lived any longer, it meant they were stealing.

At 9 p.m. we headed to bed. I would get up at 4 a.m. – It was the only time when I could find some peace. I remained at the hospital until the end of my stay in Auschwitz. I was constantly sick and they were not satisfied with my work. In 1942, it was rare for a patient to leave the hospital alive.





To describe the atmosphere in the hospital, I must bring up many details.

One has to consider who these people were, those who should have given prisoners at least a little of their hearts, some emotion, love, and strength to survive that time.

The hospital had a degree of autonomy; the boss of the hospital was the *Lagerarzt* SS, who was subordinate to the *Standortarzt* [garrison doctor]. In 1942, there was one *Lageraltester* [camp senior prisoner] there – a homosexual. The *blokowy* in block 21 was a German – a homosexual and morphine addict who had been in eight or ten prisons before. There were a few – three or four – young boys aged 18 to 20 in the block. They consorted with that German and with the camp senior prisoner. They ruled the entire block. To run afoul of such a boy meant death. They were the worst blight on the lives of both the nurses and the patients. One of them would go around with a plank and for fun beat the patients so badly that he broke the arm of one of them. Those people were completely corrupted by that environment and the murdering *en gros*. And people like that were supposed to treat the sick.

Our entire work in the hospital was problematic and made no sense. We had almost no options. The sick went to the gas. People had oedemas – the smallest scratch resulted in an infection, and their general poor health ensured its rapid progression. There were phlegmons of the shins that resulted in cavities the size of a fist, with no chance of recovery.

There were, in that quagmire, a few decent people – radiant figures – who did what they could to aid the sick and ease their hardship.

In 1942, both in the hospital and in the camp the sick received a regular food ration. But the deputy room commandant distributed the food in such a way as to cut down on bread rations, divide a pack of margarine intended to provide 12 portions into 18, and distribute the soup so that everyone received three quarters of a liter instead of a full liter. That was 25 percent less. The room numbered 350 people, 30 of which were nurses. There were some 70 Aryans there, the rest of the patients were Jews, of whom there were on average 250. The deputy room commandant had a particular hatred for the Jews. He passed the rations he had skimmed on to the Aryans, who would sell the soup, or even potato peels with margarine.

I was sick, I had a swollen leg, and I had to lie in bed for around four weeks, which I was allowed to do through corruption, naturally. A great selection came. I was lying with my leg





in a splint then, in the bed next to me was Professor Bloch, a surgeon from Paris. He worked as a *Pfleger*, he was an old man, known all throughout France. I could not get up, and neither could he. Everyone selected for the gas had a number written on their chest with a copying pencil. We both knew what that meant. The other patients did not understand what it was. It was said that the seriously ill were being moved to a great hospital in Birkenau. In the morning we were marked with numbers, after dinner our splints were removed and I walked on my own to the yard, where Prof. Bloch and I waited for death. The professor was calm, collected. He was Jewish, and when the law mandating the wearing of the Jewish star was introduced in France, he put the badge on and placed all the decorations and medals he had received in France over it, and for that he was put in Auschwitz.

There was only one car for carrying the sick, so we had to wait a long time for our turn. Our *Lagerältester* had fallen sick two weeks earlier, and the professor had been his medical advisor. I wanted to save myself. I went to our doctor, but he just screamed at me. I went to one of the nurses and asked him to go to the *Lagerältester* and tell him that Professor Bloch was in a transport. When the *Lagerältester* heard about this, he immediately ordered that doctors be pulled out of the transport. It was our group's turn. We had already lined up and were going to the car. Suddenly, our numbers were called and we were withdrawn from the transport. Another moment and it would have been too late. A week later, an even larger selection was held. All the sick men were brought out naked to a *lager* street and they started inspecting us. After they were done, they lined us up in fives and called out numbers. Out of 250 patients in our room, some thirty numbers were called out, including mine. We were told to return to the block, the rest remained in the yard, including Prof. Bloch. They marched towards the crematorium, and Prof. Bloch turned around, smiled to me, waved his hand to me – he had so much mental fortitude that he comforted me while walking to his death. They went on to the gas.

The Germans managed to bring out the worst, the basest, the most vile in people. They managed to wake and unleash all the basest and worst instincts, and they knew how to take advantage of those instincts for their own gain. They sought to extract the maximum of energy out of every prisoner, to destroy them in order to spare their own people on the one hand, and on the other to more firmly keep that mass in hand. They found many helpers among the imprisoned and, by seeding hate, they broke the prisoners up into various groups and reinforced their power. One of the means was national hatred. Not only national, but



also simply regional hatred. A Silesian considers it his holy duty to destroy, murder, and abuse a prisoner from Lesser Poland; a Varsovian the same with a man from Lwów, and so on; a German – with everyone. They spread hate between Poles, Jews, Frenchmen, they bred hate between one man and another, and the result was that a German beat a German, a Jew beat a Jew, a Pole beat a Pole; they did not only beat, but they murdered. I mentioned national hate and I now recall that first room in block 21, in the hospital, where there was a Jewish ghetto on one side and Aryan *sztubas* on the other. We could see this going on in full detail right there.

**Member of parliament Boguszewska:** In what year was that?

**Witness:** In 1942. That division was also there in 1943 and 1944, and it worked as follows: there were *Reichsdeutsche-Stubes*, that is, sections for Germans, then Jewish *sztubas* and Aryan *sztubas*. They found very loyal lackeys among the prisoners, who did the same as they did, helped them exactly the same, beat people just like they did, and they sent them to the gas just the same. The commandant of room I was a Pole from Warsaw, his name was Czesiek Soból, a righteous man to the bone, a man who remained a man. He had arrived in Auschwitz with the first transport, among the oldest numbers, [he was] known and liked all throughout the camp.

**Prosecutor Pęchalski:** What was his social background?

**Witness:** Before the war he was a member of the national police. If I am not mistaken, he worked in the security service in Warsaw. You could not tell such things in the camp, as policemen in particular were very much hated. Sometimes the prisoners would kill a policeman within 24 hours [of his arrival in the camp]. I think he was an officer of the security service, I do not know specifically. He told me something about it at some point and I promised, of course, that I would tell nobody, that I would maintain discretion. His deputy was a man named Król, from Kraków. His complete opposite, a man who stole from the sick and made a business out of it, by skimming, like I said, off bread rations. He sold or bartered away leftover bread, cut margarine rations to two thirds the normal size. If you calculate 250 to 300 patients in a ward – how much he would get! He did the same with soup, potatoes, and everything. In the block we saw those young boys who had the power because they consorted with the *blokowy* or the senior prisoner of a *lager*, where it was in fashion to deliver beatings, to starve, to send to the gas. We lived in these conditions, we had to work



as doctors and we wanted to work as doctors. I was done with the large selection before noon. Soon afterwards, a huge typhus epidemic broke out in the *lager*. There were plenty of lice and people died by the thousands. They died quickly, because there was an infectious diseases ward in block 20 and all typhus sufferers were sent there. Within a day or two most of them, especially Jews, were given intracardiac injections, or, as they were called, *szpyle*, of phenol. It was done as follows: *Unterscharführer* Kler [Klehr], an SS man, was wearing gloves and a white coat: two prisoners held down the subject and seated him in a dentist-like chair – and injected six cubic centimeters of phenol. Death followed within five to eight seconds. The injections were performed in the left-hand-side part of the block.

The prisoner would get up, still alive, cross the hall, stumbling into the opposite *sztuba*, and there he would fall. There were entire piles [of bodies] there. It was practical, as they did not have to carry them from one *sztuba* to another. They would walk by themselves. The injections were not delivered only by SS men, but also by prisoners, volunteers at that. There was a deputy *blokowy* in block 20, his name was Pańszczyk. And he delivered the injections as well, but it was not enough for him. It did not happen every day. On such days without “work,” between 10.30 and 11 p.m., everyone in the block (those who knew Pańszczyk already, at least) tried to hide. Pańszczyk went around the block and looked for a victim, and he had to find one every evening, to strangle them with his own hands – otherwise he would not go to sleep. If he did not like someone, he just went to Klehr, got a paper, and injected them, regardless of who it was – a doctor, a nurse, or a patient. Pańszczyk was not a doctor, he was a nurse, but he performed surgeries, while the doctor carried the patient to the infirmary and back. He terrorized the whole of block 20.

**Prosecutor Pęchalski:** What happened to Pańszczyk?

**Witness:** He went with a transport in 1943. In spring came the first large transports of Aryans into the German interior, and he was put on one.

**Prosecutor Pęchalski:** And you do not know what happened to him?

**Witness:** The prisoners killed him during the transport. The prisoners would kill such traitors and snitches at the first opportunity, and one came up during the transport. Later on, when transports were more frequent, the prisoners would threaten each other by saying: “Just you wait, we’ll go on a transport.”



**Chairman:** Have you personally seen cases of the phenol injections that you spoke of?

**Witness:** No. I was told about it by one of my fellow prisoners.

**Chairman:** Based on many accounts?

**Witness:** Yes.

**Chairman:** Was the patient being held up when he walked between [the rooms]?

**Witness:** They were pushed.

**Chairman:** And did they know what it meant when they were supposed to get the injection?

**Witness:** Some knew, some did not, but they did not struggle. They were so weak they could not defend themselves, they had a high fever, 40-41 degrees [Celsius], as they were usually typhus sufferers. Even if they wanted to struggle, they were grabbed by the arm and subdued. In 1942, the mentally ill were also injected.

**Member of parliament Boguszewska:** In the camp or in the hospital?

**Witness:** In the camp. Another one like Pańszczyk was the *blokowy* of block 28, Stosel. I know what happened to Pańszczyk because I had a personal interest in it: I had personal quarrels with him and with a few other people. It is interesting that almost all of them are dead, but I still live.

There were no baths [in the hospital]. Only later were the necessary facilities installed in our block and we bathed, and the patients washed themselves as well. One time, like I said, I had a wound on my leg. While I was bathing, a prisoner entered. I saw from his behavior that he had to be some notable figure among the prisoners. He looks at me and says: "Why do you bother – you will die anyway, you will not make it with that leg. Come to me in the afternoon with a bread ration and I will inject you. Hell, I'll do it for half a bread ration." And he was completely serious about it, he had no awareness of what he sounded like. I understood that the situation was dicey. I was covered in soap, standing under the shower, I wiped myself quickly and, so as not to stay around and wait, I wanted to put on my clothes and disappear. "What, have you never bathed before? Back to the shower!" – and he turned on cold water, and I stood for 15 minutes in the shower and waited. The fun began. He must have been impressed that I stood there calmly, he saw that I was not afraid of the water – and he let



me go. He just said: "Come after lunch." A naked man looks different than a dressed one, so I was hoping he would not recognize me.

Another such man was Stosel. He was the *blokowy* at block 28 of that hospital. There were four hospital blocks: 19, 20, 21, and 28. For a while there were only three, 19 was not there yet. In 1943 block 9 was created as well, making five hospital blocks, with Stosel being the *blokowy* at block 28.

**Member of parliament Boguszewska:** What was his nationality?

**Witness:** Half-German, half-Polish. He was in the lager as a *Reichsdeutsch* [ethnic German], *blokowy* at block 28, the infirmary. That was where wounds were dressed and patients were received, the so-called *Aufnahme* [intake]. Stosel administered injections and sent people to the gas as well. He picked people for the gas and for injections from among the new arrivals. I had a serious beef with Stosel, and I made it through alive as well. Stosel was caught having gold, so they took him to the bunker in block 11 and finished him off there.

**Member of parliament Boguszewska:** The SS men finished him off?

**Witness:** Yes, yes. There were also doctors who did such things, who administered injections and sent people to the gas.

**Citizen Nałkowska:** Were they all Germans?

**Witness:** Not just Germans, also prisoner doctors. We only really had one permanent German doctor, the others were *Volksdeutsche*. As far as people were concerned, we ought to also mention those little boys from block 20, who acted up and abused others, thinking it was all just good fun. As I said, it was during a typhus epidemic that claimed thousands of victims. Because of that, the *Lagerkommando* [camp command] decided to conduct a great delousing of the camp. I believe you know the layout of the Auschwitz camp. There are three rows of houses there, twenty meters apart. One row is 1 through 11, the second parallel row is 12 through 21, the third is 22 through 28.

**Member of parliament Boguszewska:** Were the blocks made of brick?

**Witness:** Yes. In 1942, blocks 1 through 11 housed women. That row was separated from the rest of the *lager* with electrified barbed wire. The next two rows of blocks housed men.



During the delousing, women were sent to Birkenau and the blocks were disinfected one after another. First of all, people had to change their clothes. The weak and wounded were sent to Birkenau. The healthy were washed, bathed, shaved, and put in blocks 1 through 10 (not 11). The old, empty blocks were gassed with a special gas. Half the prisoners were sent to Birkenau, in other words, to die. Afterwards, at the very end, the hospitals were deloused. The entire block 20 went to the gas, as did most of block 21, most of 28 and most of 19, so after the delousing no-one was left in block 20, some prisoners were left in block 28 and some in 19. During the delousing, the remaining patients were taken to block 19, as everyone was being washed in a shower. We took many of the sick to the bath on a stretcher, as they could not move and died while being washed. There were cases of patients with high fever dying before getting there, even though it was barely one hundred meters. There were scenes where patients were in agony – they were dying – and the commandant would say: “Do not touch this one, he will die anyway” – and that patient would be dying for two days and lying there. After moving the patients, we cleaned out the block, we cleaned it and then the block was gassed.

While cleaning the block, I clashed with Stosel. He hated Jews. So he comes to me – my number was sewn on badly, because we had received new clothes and in my haste I had not had time to attach it properly – and most importantly he sees I am Jewish. “So it was you that I was waiting for” – and he goes to work on me. Two people are standing beside me, and if I were to raise my hand, they would kill me. He worked on me until I fell, and when I fell, he picked me up with his legs and that game continued for half an hour. He said: “Enough for today, to be continued tomorrow.” I went to bed, my shoes were full of blood, and that saved me, as he could not find me the next day. Afterwards, when the block was returned to order, our patients were taken back to block 21 and again I stayed in bed for some two weeks and got up again, because we could not lie down for too long. But I started to work – of course, I could not do what I was expected to and as a result I was struck off the list of nurses and sent back to the camp for regular work. The *blokowy*, the clerk there, had some sympathy for me – I do not know why. He was a Pole from Warsaw, Dr Kowalewski. He says to me: “Wait, you will not go, go to bed as a patient.” I went to bed, he wrote me a new medical record – I knew that had I gone to the *lager* with a leg like that, I had the right to live for no more than ten days.

I got experience first-hand of the suffering the patients in the hospital went through. I was in bed for three months. (It seems there is no other Jew who would have been in bed for so



long in that period). All day in bed, dirty, the sheets black with the blood and pus of x-many people who had lain on it before me. In the morning, barefoot, across the yard, through snow – to the shower, then back, wet, without a towel. There were three sick people to a bed 75 centimeters wide and 2 meters long, all of them covered in wounds or with severe abscesses, where even the smallest movement caused terrible pain. Terrible hunger, beatings, dressings replaced in theory twice a week, once a week in practice, or even once every ten days. If the room had 250 people in theory, usually the last beds were left without dressings, as the gentlemen were tired by then – it happened very frequently. Please, imagine – a large ward in the block, there is a path through the middle. A line of beds on one side – they were not really beds, but rather triple bunks, usually one bunk consisted of 12 beds, and there were seven or eight such groups on both sides of the room. The first group from the first room went for wound dressing – 12 beds, 30 patients went to the infirmary – they went back, then another group went and so forth, up to the last group in the room. When it was late and the “gentlemen” said it was enough for one day, the last *sztuba* was shafted and would go without wound dressing for another week even. And those dressings leaked, they would start leaking pus after three hours, much less ten days, not to mention that the wounds did not heal – they were very dirty because the gauze tore away, dirtied the bed, and you can imagine how the sick felt and how they recovered. And to add to all this, there was terrible hunger.

**Member of parliament Kornacki:** Were the patients beaten?

**Witness:** Yes, they were beaten.

**Member of parliament Kornacki:** By whom?

**Witness:** The nurses.

**Member of parliament Kornacki:** Why were they beaten?

**Witness:** For two reasons. For example: the patients are in their beds. A nurse is walking around the *sztuba* – he must have order. He sees a blanket hanging off one of the beds. He does not say a word, he won't pick up the blanket, he raises a nailed boot and hits the patient. Or one of those little boys, who liked walking over sick people very much. It must have excited him as a way of preparing him for his nightly escapades. He was perfect at beating people like this. He would look around – “Why are you laughing?” – and start working on them with a plank. Smoking was banned in the block, but a surgery patient, who usually did not have a fever,





might smoke, if he was a smoker. When he got a little tobacco, he wanted to smoke, as what would he get from living anyway? He was not getting better, he was swollen, he was losing weight while lying down, the filth, the weekly selections. He knows he has no right to exist, and the cigarette is his only joy, his only contentment. He succumbs to that temptation! They will catch him, smoking is not allowed. Dozens of such minor infractions. People have to be clean – a very reasonable thing – they go from bed to bed – “You have not washed yourself, why are you not getting up?” – and he starts beating him. He gets up quickly, with a 40-degree fever, abscesses open, he barely stands, he has to go to wash himself. The stench is so horrible that it is impossible to describe, the day is horribly long, the atmosphere is terribly grim and there is the hunger. A man waits for dinner and gets three quarters of a liter of soup. He sees others get two or three liters – he’s getting my soup, he’s eating my life, and the next evening he comes to me and sells me potato peels for my margarine, also skimmed.

Monday came, Klehr arrived for a selection. The nurses also appeared, carefully checking to make sure that nobody hid under a bed, making sure they went to the gas. Every week during those three months, every Monday, I stood up for selection. I knew where the transports were headed; most, however, did not know or did not want to know. There was no other way, everyone had to go there, knowing nothing could help them. There were two people there: Soból and Król. Soból was the room commandant. He believed he had some obligations towards me as a colleague. It was impossible to save everyone, even if one wanted to. Even though I never exchanged more than five or six words with the man, he considered it his duty to save me. The commandant’s deputy, meanwhile, whom I accidentally offended at one point, believed I should go to the gas. Every Monday he was just waiting for the moment when Soból would not be there so that he could send me to the gas. Soból ordinarily did not appear in the ward, he was a musician, and that was a more honorable office. So he was rarely in the ward, but whenever he arrived, he brought some bread. One has to remember that it was very dangerous to give something to a Jew back then. On Mondays, he was always present in the ward and saved a number of patients from death.

In this atmosphere of insane despair, hopelessness, people learned to live, and even have fun. There was a camp orchestra, which [played] a concert every Sunday. There was even a jazz band. On Sundays before noon or in the afternoon, they showed up and played for the prisoners, and on Mondays there were selections. But people did not suffer that nonsense and enjoyed that hour of music. When I first heard the music, I thought that either I had





gone crazy, or those people had lost their minds, and only much later did I understand the nonsense, and then I could sit down and for one hour forget that I was in a *lager*.

**Chairman:** What was the repertoire?

**Witness:** Classical music, concerts and jazz. There was a band named The Jolly Boys in Poland – the chief of that band, a jolly boy, gave people a lot of joy and helped them. There was nothing holding them back – they were well-off, as everyone knew them.

**Member of parliament Kornacki:** Doctor, we would like to hear at what times of day, in the winter and in the summer, did the prisoners find time for entertainment, swimming, to go to the canteen, the theatre and for the so-called organization? When did you have time for it?

**Witness:** We could not swim in the river at all. The river was beyond the wire, so there was no access to it. Only those who worked by the river could swim, and the *kapos* would sometimes grab them by the neck and throw them into the water. However, in 1944, around autumn, a swimming pool was built in the camp itself, with an inscription saying "1940."

**Member of Parliament Boguszewska:** It was post-dated, why?

**Witness:** Yes, post-dated. Some commission was supposed to arrive. Two swimming competitions were organized. Of course, the participants were *kapos* who had too much energy. In 1944, a brothel was established.

**Member of parliament Kornacki:** In what month, more or less, in spring or in autumn?

**Witness:** I do not recall such things. The girls volunteered for the brothel. They were promised freedom in exchange for half a year of "work." There were Russians, Ukrainians, Germans, and Poles there. Only Aryans were allowed to go to the brothel. The prisoners received the so-called *Premierscheins*, that is, vouchers supposed to reward good work. It cost a Reichsmark, a half, two, sometimes nothing, it varied. For 50 pfennigs one could buy a bottle of water, for a Reichsmark go to the brothel. A very civilized facility in the Germans' opinion.

**Chairman:** Were the girls in the brothel also paid? Were they also paid a salary?

**Witness:** No, they were only promised freedom. Of course, many were infected with syphilis. There were check-ups, but the disease cannot be diagnosed from a superficial [examination]. One prisoner infected another.



**Prosecutor Pęchalski:** Was one allowed to stay there for long?

**Witness:** No, they were assigned 20 minutes. It was done the German way. *Ordnung und Kultur* [order and civilization]. A cinema was opened only in 1944.

**Citizen Nałkowska:** Was it a privilege, or could anyone go to the cinema?

**Witness:** Anyone. The cinema was free. Tickets were distributed among the blocks and the *blokowy* would give them to whoever he pleased. I remember it was like this with the cinema: beatings at the entrance, and beatings at the exit. It was called "cinema," but the beatings were part of the program. One time, one of the *Rapportführers* [roll call officers] comes in, drunk, and commands: "*Knie haugen.*" And so we watched the film while squatting. It was the same with the theatre, the so-called repertoire was *lager*-level, there were jokes, there was something like a revue. The shows were in German. They were performed by prisoners. [Performing] in the theatre had a big upside: the 20 people in the artists' troupe were left alone. In general, there was a tendency on the behalf of the prisoners to place as many people as possible in places where they could avoid hard labor. I met one *Vorarbeiter* who instructed as follows: "Work with your eyes, that is, stop when there is nobody around, work when you see somebody." As for free time, there was free time after the evening roll call until bedtime.

We could go for a walk, talk, but very often there was the so-called *Lagerspera*, that is, lockdown in blocks, whether as a punishment or because some transport had arrived, or when people were being taken to the gas.

**Member of parliament Boguszewska:** The doctor has interrupted his account of Dr Kowalewski.

**Witness:** Doctor Kowalewski was a block *Schreiber* [clerk] and, alongside Soból, they took a liking to me and protected me. They kept saving me for three months.

**Citizen Nałkowska:** Tell us if you encountered any underground activity in the camp: did you hear about anything?

**Witness:** I will speak of it later. It was later on. Aside from what I have said so far, our block had one more specialty. From the windows of our block, one could see block 11 and the windows of that block. We could see the death wall. I will speak of what it looked like when I talk about block 11.

The winter ended – 1943 arrived. Relations suddenly changed for the better in that year. A new doctor arrived as a prisoner, a surgeon, a Pole, Dr Grabczyński, and he brought order to the hospital. The sick were now tended to by the doctors, the nurses did the sanitary work. The sick received everything they could be given from a medical point of view. At the same time, in spring of 1943, a transport of German political prisoners arrived, some of them decent people. They distributed food fairly, Dr Grabczyński introduced honest treatment and turned block 21 into a hospital, and he cared for people the same: whether they were Russian, German, Polish, a regular “Muslim,” or a Jew, everyone was treated the same. It was an internal matter of the block and everyone received everything that was available, and we owe it exclusively to Dr Grabczyński.

**Citizen Nałkowska:** His fate?

**Witness:** He is alive in Kraków. He is working – currently in the clinic at the Jagiellonian University. I spoke to him the day before yesterday, he is one of the greatest luminaries. When I speak or think about block 21, I associate it with three Polish doctors: Dr Grabczyński, Dr Feigel [Fejkiel] from Lwów, and Dr Orzeszko. Unfortunately I do not know what happened to Drs Fejkiel and Orzeszko, as they went with a transport on 18 January. They could not stay, as the *Lagerarzt* knew them – they had to go, same as Prof. Olbrycht, a man of Europe-wide fame in the field of forensic medicine.

**Chairman:** And what was his function there?

**Witness:** For a time he ran a pharmacy, which he received after the intervention of his colleagues. He was very honest. Then he performed autopsies. It was part of his specialty. One cannot forget these three figures, as they were people who put their own lives on the line any number of times to save whoever they could whenever they could. They saved people, prisoners, without making any distinctions between them. I will not forget the day when there was a selection and I had to present myself to the head doctor. I am talking about this in such detail because I want to present what the life of a poor, sick prisoner was like when the doctors were mostly fearing for their own lives, and what it was like for that same prisoner in the same conditions when a humane doctor was in charge. I want to show what one person can do when they want to. The head doctor had to present the sick for selections to the *Lagerarzt*. The doctor was standing when the patient approached, then Dr Grabczyński [said] quickly: “He will be fine in five days” – and before the *Lagerarzt*



knows what has happened, Dr Grabczyński puts the record away. He did this quite openly, he would not be startled or scared. The *Lagerarzt*, who learned surgery only by working on prisoners, needed him. There were cases where Dr Grabczyński would name another doctor, an SS man, as allegedly having an interest in the patient, to save a sick person from the gas in this way. He was a man who quickly read the situation and used any number of such tricks to save the patients.

**Citizen Nałkowska:** Was there a quota [of prisoners] to be set aside?

**Witness:** In 1942, during selections, the *Lagerarzt* would come and say: "I need 60 sick from this ward." The doctor answered: "I do not have that many." He selected, the SS man decided. It all depended on who presented the state of the patients. The fewest sick went from a block when Dr Grabczyński was a doctor.

I described three doctors from my block. But there are also the names of doctors who administered injections, snitched, and I think this not the place to speak of them. There should be a confidential session held to consider this matter. Besides, if I am not mistaken, the authorities have already taken certain steps to arrest such doctors. I am talking here about cases I know fully, not rumors. This is not just about the life of a man, but about honor as well. I must be very careful, if I say something, it is about things I have seen myself, and if I have not seen them, then I strive to be very careful. So Dr Grabczyński worked in our block and did so much. It became known that block 21 was a hospital. In February, the first transport of Aryans, mostly Poles, departed for other camps, deep in Germany, and a great number of people were taken from the hospital, leaving more places. Changes were introduced. Many of those who were unsympathetic left, new people came in their place. I got a new job. It was in the spring of 1943. Block 21 entered a new period, which I would call "a fight for every patient." With a boss like that, a man of good will, we could take steps towards fighting the SS men for the life of every "Muslim" who came to us. We hung around, helped, when someone was sick for too long, we set up new records for them, went to block 28 and said: "I will discharge him, you give him a new record sheet." We stole the infirmary sheets, destroyed the old ones and set up new ones. It was an organized fight against the German, saving the sick, sabotaging what the Germans wanted to accomplish.

**Chairman:** How could a prisoner be released?



**Witness:** It went through Berlin. We had to pay a lot and know whom to pay. We had to find someone who would go and arrange for it. Grabczyński was released on the condition that he would work in Auschwitz as a civilian worker, as a doctor in the SS infirmary. He agreed, he took the job, worked for two months and one morning he ran away with his wife, who got him a release from the camp. He hid until the Russian army arrived and he returned to Kraków. Interestingly, Dr Grabczyński was one of the first to arrive in Auschwitz after the Russian liberation: he sent doctors, nurses, he moved the sick out of there. He was the first to get things in motion, he organized the help from the Red Cross.

After Dr Grabczyński was released, his place was taken by Dr Orzeszko, an incredibly righteous and dutiful man. He also did not differentiate, for him a patient was a patient, and Dr Orzeszko was available to everyone, day or night. The third brilliant figure was Dr Fejkiel. At first he was in block 20, the toughest one, where there were the most patients with infectious diseases. He saved many of the sick and did a lot of good.

This shows that if someone righteous had an office, they could save people, they did not have to be an animal, they did not have to murder to keep their position. Had the others understood this, maybe Auschwitz would have been different. I remember a scene from 1943, made up of two parts. The first took place in Birkenau, the other – in our *lager*. I know them both now, because my colleague, who was in Birkenau, told me the first, and I know the second. There were a number of youths in the *lager*. Sometimes the transport was smaller, so there was no gassing. Sometimes an SS man took a liking to a kid, so he let them out – depending on the SS man's mood. One time all the children from Birkenau [aged] 14 to 16 were selected, but they were told that they were going to a *Pfleger* training in Auschwitz. There were 163 of them, all boys. They were sent to Auschwitz that afternoon. They were lined up in the yard between blocks 20 and 21. They were taken individually to block 20, where they were given injections.

**Member of Parliament Boguszewska:** Were they Jewish children?

**Witness:** Of all nationalities, I think Jewish too. I remember a few transports of Polish children arrived in Birkenau, but no children were ever seen in the camp again. A transport of children from Theresienstadt arrived once. They were all gassed. There was also a transport of 600 children, and as there were no other transports at the same time, they could not be gassed, because there were not enough people. The SS men then clubbed those children to death with



rifle butts. Children in Auschwitz are a special chapter. Children had no right to live. I remember a transport of youths from Łódź arriving in 1944. Some went to Birkenau, some to Auschwitz, and they were made *Tierpflegers* [animal carers]. These children got up at 3 in the morning (they were youths [aged] 16 to 18). They went to sleep at 10 p.m. They worked with the horses all day.

The year 1943 to 1944 was also marked by something unique: experimentation on prisoners. Before I talk about the experiments, I would also like to say a few words about Klehr, how he worked. Klehr, who administered injections to prisoners with gusto, did not restrict himself to just injecting the typhus sufferers or those brought for the injections, but if there was no typhus, if there was no-one to inject – he found his own material. He would go to block 28 and enter a room where the patients admitted to the hospital were waiting to be assigned to the barracks, and he picked them from there. He picked 15-20 people and injected them on the spot, so as not to bother carrying the bodies.

**Chairman:** Did someone assist in that procedure?

**Witness:** Yes, there was always someone holding them down.

I remember the days when the transports of “Muslims” from nearby camps arrived. The transports went through block 28 in Auschwitz, from where they were loaded onto cars and sent to be gassed. The scenes were macabre. The people chosen for these transports were so emaciated that you could count their skin-wrapped bones. I could not understand where those skeleton men could find room on their bodies for the pus-spilling wounds. The transports for the gas were very frequent. Although the living conditions in Auschwitz itself changed for the better year by year, as receiving packages became allowed, thanks to which prisoners’ food situation improved, the conditions in the nearby camps remained terrible, just like in the first years of Auschwitz. We had the opportunity to learn this very well in the hospital. When a patient from one of the nearby camps arrived in the hospital, they looked like the kind of patient we had in Auschwitz in 1942. The patients from nearby camps had their entire shins and thighs and their arms completely covered in abscesses, they were emaciated to the very limits. I remember one of those men, a typical specimen, 170 cm tall, who weighed 35 kg.

**Chairman:** How does the witness explain the change in hospital conditions when Dr Grabczyński was assigned to the hospital? How could the aforementioned, while subordinate to the German head doctor, effect a change in those conditions?



**Witness:** A few reasons contributed to it. Doctor Grabczyński was assigned to block 21 in late 1942. The changes I have testified about occurred in early 1943. After two, three months Dr Grabczyński became head doctor of the surgery department. The German doctor had to respect him, because he needed him, especially since he was not very skilled and had to “study” under him. Thanks to that, Dr Grabczyński, who remained in good standing with the German head doctor, was not afraid of anyone, inspiring respect in other doctors. The head doctors always found everything clean and orderly, and after checking that there were no malfunctions and finishing his inspection, he would leave. He never looked around to see if there was theft in the block, if the prisoners were cared for, or if they were treated poorly. Dr Grabczyński worked very effectively to remove those abuses and the shortages they caused. He took so much personal risk in the process that, one day, he was stripped of his post and moved to the position of doctor for one of the *sztubas*. However, 24 hours later he was back at his old job. It was not that simple, as Doctor Grabczyński had many enemies, the most dangerous of whom was Dr Derling [Dering], a Pole, a gynecologist from Warsaw who had signed the *volkslista*. I heard that his wife (I do not know her) was a very decent, righteous Pole and that she was in prison in Warsaw for many years. The Germans promised her an immediate release from prison if she became a *volksdeutsch* – she refused. Doctor Dering was hated by prisoners of all nationalities, he was in charge of the operations room in block 21, later on he became a senior doctor in a hospital in the *lager*. He learned surgery in the camp, as he had only worked as a gynecologist before.

**Citizen Nałkowska:** What was he arrested for?

**Witness:** I do not know the reason for his arrest. I know that Dr Dering became a *volksdeutsch* while in the Auschwitz camp. He performed castrations there.

**Prosecutor Pęchalski:** Did he perform the castrations on orders from Klauberg [Clauberg], or on his own initiative, by himself, to curry favor with the Germans?

**Witness:** I cannot say that with certainty.

**Chairman:** Could such procedures be performed without the knowledge and approval of his superiors?

**Witness:** The fact is Dering performed those procedures, but someone else could have done it instead.





Doctor Dering hated Grabczyński because he had been a practicing surgeon before the war, while Dr Dering had only learned surgery in the camp. He tried to undermine Dr Grabczyński's position at all costs, but he failed.

**Chairman:** Did Dr Dering also perform such procedures on women?

**Witness:** Yes, the procedures consisted of a laparotomy.

**Chairman:** What does the witness know about implanting women with cancer?

**Witness:** It was probably also done with Dr Dering's participation. I cannot say that with complete certainty, I know for sure Dr Dering performed castrations. Doctor Grabczyński had a lot of trouble, plenty of conflicts, he risked a lot, because he put himself on the line, which was obviously very dangerous. He used his position in the hospital fully for the benefit of the prisoners. Doctor Grabczyński was very humane. It is very telling when you consider that the intelligentsia in the camp failed, broke down completely. A member of the intelligentsia was ready to do anything to get a little soup or a piece of bread. If a sick man died in a bed of three people, his neighbors waited for his death to be able to take and consume the piece of bread the dying man was holding. If someone died, it was not reported, so that his neighbors could eat his bread and soup. Death was only reported a day later. A nurse whose duty it was to report the death to his superiors would keep the body for himself for a day, after the neighbors had reported his death, in order to take the dead man's bread ration. The crew of the morgue maintained the same practices. There was a great hunger in the camp. The matter of desecration of a dead body was not taken into account at all, as human life was not respected at all and the living were treated worse than old rags.

One of the overseers was the *Sanitätsdienstgehilfe*, the so-called sanitary assistant, in charge of the hospital – his boss was the *Lagerarzt*. The *Unterscharführer* [SS junior NCO] administered injections to prisoners, moreover, his favorite pastimes included entertaining himself at the prisoners' expense. He conducted the roll call every morning and evening. We always lined up for that roll call in the downstairs hallway, forming two lines, the roll call was five minutes long, then we returned to our rooms. After receiving us, the *Unterscharführer* generally checked the prisoner count, then left. But often he would come in a bad mood or bored, or annoyed by somebody. At those times he would always find something wrong with us – either he did not like our stance, or the look we gave him – he would then have





us even out the line, and since something was still not to his liking, he would issue his favorite command: "First line right – second line turn left – stand apart." As he issued the command quickly and in German, most Polish prisoners, who did not understand German well, performed the order poorly, which finally upset the *Unterscharführer* to the point that he ordered "sports." The "sport" did not resemble real sports in any way, it consisted of the *Unterscharführer* leading us out to the yard, holding us there for as long as the roll call lasted in the *lager*: an hour in the morning, two to three in the evening. During that time, he constantly issued commands: "lie down," "get up," "crawl," "roll" – he ordered us to do squats, slowly, in four beats, this was the most unpleasant exercise of all. If someone got up from the puddle they were lying in, the *Unterscharführer* approached them and pushed them into the ground with his heel. After such "sport," a man's knees would give out completely. I remember that *Unterscharführer* taking the 60-year-old Dr Kruczek and three other people out of the block one time, and for half an hour he did "gymnastics" with them. After half an hour, he took two of them separately for more "gymnastics," with the end result being that both of those prisoners barely managed to return to the block – one of them died two days later. That was the typical, innocent "fun" of the SS men.

I remember an account by one of the *kapos* of the *Sonderkommando*. That *kapo* had command of 120 people digging a very deep and long ditch for some special reason. During that work, the *kapo* was approached by the SS men, who asked how many people were under him. He said 120. They also asked him how many wheelbarrows were there for those 120 people. He answered 60. To that, they said: "That is very good. We will be here in half an hour. Fill all the wheelbarrows with dirt." Half an hour later, the SS men came back and brought trained dogs and their "ladies." There was a high, very narrow earthen embankment right above the ditch. The SS men ordered 60 prisoners to run along the embankment with the wheelbarrows and they set their dogs on them. The nervous, very tired prisoners, with dogs behind them, could not carry out that order, so most of them fell off the embankment into the ditch and died. The SS men started shooting at the remaining people. When they were done with their "fun," they told the *kapo* they would come again in the afternoon and that the wheelbarrows were to be filled with dirt for the afternoon. When leaving, they also ordered all the dead bodies to be taken out of the ditch, along with the wheelbarrows that had fallen into it.

In the afternoon, the SS men did indeed come back, again bringing their dogs, with the difference being that this time there were women with them. When at some point the *kapo*



approached them and reported that the work was very important and he had no people left to finish it, one of the SS men told him that there was a new transport coming in that evening and he would be assigned new people from it, and he patted him on the back, and even shared a cigarette with him. The women accompanying these SS men, I must stress here, were often worse than the men, they often came to watch the prisoners being tortured. Such behavior in women can be observed not only in Auschwitz, but also in other camps. They were Germans. Their behavior and presence encouraged the SS men to show off for them. There were also SS women employed in the camp, who displayed exceptional brutality. They worked in the women's segments, they always had dogs with them.

Sometimes, either due to backdoor deals or for some other reason, we in the hospital would have enough food. One of the people assigned to the hospital had a starving friend in the *lager* and decided to help him. To that end, every evening he would lower a liter of soup for him on a string from the window. One time, while he was doing this, the *Unterscharführer* sitting by the window noticed it. As a result, he found that patient, took him away, and beat him with an iron poker. He also ordered him to do squats, burpees and so on. The prisoner was a tall man (180 cm), he weighed 95 kg. He was recuperating for months afterwards. I remember prisoners sentenced to flogging, ending with a phlegmon of the buttocks in 90 [percent] of cases. The buttocks developed cavities the size of a fist. Those flogged would later recuperate in our hospital department – it would take months. The most severe wounds were on the prisoners who had been interrogated in the political department. In general, after such an interrogation, the interrogated was taken to the hospital. I saw people who had been beaten and lay in bed for two, three days, and then died, without having any wounds, just internal damage. One time I saw a man completely black from the beatings, from his knees up to his neck, with huge wounds on his buttocks, with his genitals swollen.

**Chairman:** Did you speak with those people?

**Witness:** No. They were in my *sztuba*, they did not tell me anything about their experiences. But I saw their hospital records, which explained everything. Political prisoners would not have talked to me anyway. After a time, if they started to trust me, they would tell me of their misfortunes, but when they arrived in the ward, not knowing me just yet, they did not trust me.

One day, when I was in block 19, I was walking through a ward when a patient lying in bed called to me. He was an older man, and asked me for a few minutes of conversation. When



I sat next to him, he told me he was a monk and an ordained priest from Warsaw. He also told me that he spoke to me as a man because he was feeling his death coming, and he was 80 years old, departing the world at peace. I was moved by his words, his calm, and his spiritual composure. The priest asked me, if I were to ever leave the camp, to let his superiors know he was dead. He told me his name, but, unfortunately, I did not remember it. Therefore I wanted to ask him to tell me his name and the name of his monastery again, but at that moment I was called and had to leave quickly. I then worked until late at night, and in the evening I was beaten by an SS man so badly that I spent the next day in bed. I never saw that priest again, but the conversation with him gave me the inner strength to survive the adversities of the camp. I shall never forget the conversation I had with him.

I remember how in early September a sick man was brought in who had to be operated on that same day. The surgery was of the kind that required another operation after some time (two to six weeks). The patient had arrived from Budapest, he came from Lwów, where he was an attorney, his name was Löwenstein. His father was a member of the Austrian parliament and the chief defense attorney in the Steiger trial in Lwów [Steiger was a Jewish man wrongly accused of attempting to assassinate the President of Poland]. Doctor Löwenstein, a captain in the Polish army, was an active member of the PPS [Polish Socialist Party] in Lwów. He was part of an underground movement back during the partitions, [part] of the socialist party. After war broke out in 1939, he left for Budapest. There he served as the chief of communications between Warsaw and London. He remained in that post for a longer time. In 1944, however, he was tracked down by the Gestapo, who had simultaneously caught the courier coming to him, as the chief of communications, with mail from Poland. The Gestapo sent Dr Löwenstein to Auschwitz in early September. His comrades, the socialist prisoners, asked me to try to nurse the man back to health, as an escape attempt was to be prepared for him within two weeks. Dr Löwenstein was an outstanding individual. I made every effort to improve his health, so that his operation could be performed sooner. However, this was all for naught, as one day the *Lagerarzt* arrived in the ward with a death sentence. The patient was put on a stretcher – as a convalescent he could not walk. He was taken to the lobby, where he waited for a car. At some point he asked me if he was going to be gassed or shot. He asked me that completely calmly, and I, hunched over him, seeing the camp doctor over my shoulder, told him that he was being taken to be shot. “That is better,” he answered. When, after two hours of waiting in the lobby, he was



being put into the car, I leaned over him and he said: "Tell the comrades I gave up nobody. I was loyal to the party and its cause until the end."

One time the Allied planes were bombing factories located near the camp. One of the bombs hit a barrack and fell into the basement, where the SS men had brought all the prisoners so that they would not escape. As a result of the bomb exploding, some 40 more seriously wounded people were brought to the hospital. Two days later, the *Lagerführer* [camp commander] sent the victims of the raid flowers, and four days later a piece of chocolate as well, stolen from the food packages sent for the prisoners who had died. Four days after that, a selection was held and most of the victims were chosen for the gas. I believed, as the other prisoners did, that if a German is doing something good for a prisoner, that act of kindness had to be regarded as something suspect. I remember that during one of the selections, a prisoner who had been in the camp for two and a half years was selected. He was well aware where they were taking him, and as he was leaving, he turned to me with the following words: "See, I have struggled for so long, and now I'm going to the gas. If you get out of here, tell people how we were killed." The people going to the gas had to put on their clothes, their shoes, even put on a cap.

I remember how one of the prisoners marked for gassing asked two of his friends, once they left the camp, to let his wife in Paris know that he was gassed. He ordered them to thank his wife on his behalf for the time she had spent with him, and to ask her on his behalf to raise their children well. I remember that he was saying it to them completely calmly, composed, and yet his companions that he spoke to were crying. The prisoner had a broken arm and he was slated to have the cast removed a week or so later. He impressed me with the calm he had when leaving to his death.

The moments that left the strongest impression were the ones when the people chosen for gassing were called out during the selections. It would often happen that the number of those chosen for the gas was very large, so they could not be taken away as a single group. For that reason, they were taken away in batches, each taking 15 to 20 minutes to leave. After one group was taken away, they would come back for the rest. Until the last moment the sick lying in their beds did not know who would be leaving for the gas. The people chosen for the gassing were called out by their numbers, no-one knew who would go and who would stay, which caused great anxiety among the prisoners. One time, during a selection, one of



the patients turned to me and asked: "Doctor, is this everyone already?" I did not know what to answer.

I wanted to speak of some more details from the hospital, then give a conclusion on camp life, and then some general outlines. As you know, when a new transport arrived, a selection was performed immediately as soon as the train was emptied; some of the completely healthy men moved on to our camp. After they arrived among us, but before they had changed into *Häftling* [prisoner] uniforms, the *Lagerarzt*, an SS man, came and performed another selection, pulling out the sick, weak, those incapable of hard work and sending them to the gas. Those selections very often took place near the *Effektenkammer* in front of block 26.

I remember how a transport arrived from the Netherlands – it was in 1944 – and some men were sent to the camp, and since there was not enough room, they were sent to block 11, and we could see from the windows of our block that they were lined up in the yard and a doctor was performing a selection. It turned out there were a lot of weak ones. He glanced at all of them – and sent them all to the gas. He simply lost patience because too many of them were sick. He left one behind – a 70-year-old Dutch man who caught his eye because he had a hernia of extraordinary size, stretching almost all the way from his scrotum to his knees, three-quarters of the way down his thigh. The doctor had been learning to perform surgeries on people, so he was curious. It was clear that after the surgery the man would have to go to the gas. When the patient arrived at our surgery department, we did not want to operate on him. It was nonsense to operate if the hernia had not been bothering him for so many years. After a few days the doctor asked us if the surgery had been performed – he was simply forcing us to do the operation, and we did it. The surgery went perfectly. In a quirk of fate, the man lived for another six months, although the food was bad and there were many selections, and after those six months he died a natural death in his bed.

**Chairman:** Were those unplanned, random selections [from the transports] held without registration [of the prisoners]?

**Witness:** It was done like this: first, people were sorted – women and children separately, men separately. Men who were healthy at a glance were sorted out – at a glance, as it was not a medical examination; the young were put in one group, the old in the other, the same was done with the women.



**Chairman:** So the people going to be gassed were not aware of it?

**Witness:** No, they were not.

**Chairman:** So we might figure that whole millions of people died in this way, unaware?

**Witness:** I shall discuss this when describing the crematorium, I will explain it with numbers and then say where get them from.

As I have said, I arrived in 1942, and with time some things were eased. Life was becoming relatively milder. I remember how in spring of 1943 I was standing in the window and saw a sparrow, and only then did I realize that it was the first time in a year that I had seen a bird. Try to imagine – in a camp of several dozen thousand people I saw no birds, because they were not there, there was not a breadcrumb they could feed on, even by the garbage containers. And six months later I saw the first cat in the camp.

In 1943, a huge *Pflegernia* was set up in the block, that is, a room for the nurses from our block and others to sleep in. Obviously in the evenings the nurses came together, discussed events and so on. I will never forget one evening. It was after a selection and in the evening, while I was lying in bed, I heard a group of nurses talking a few beds over: they were joyfully talking about how the Jews were being taken to the gas again. And out of all of them only one started scolding them for thinking that way, telling them it was wrong. I remember how one time in 1944, when the large Hungarian transports were arriving, blankets were collected from the entire camp.

**Chairman:** What do you mean by “large transports?”

**Witness:** I will explain that later, when I get around to the transports. In 1944, 650,000 people arrived from Hungary, meaning three or four large transports a day.

All the blankets were taken away, leaving only two [per person]. Of course some had more – not everyone. The blankets were taken away and people had no idea what was going on. One day before noon, several thousand women from the Birkenau women’s camp arrived. They wore long cilices, somewhat grey, neither dresses nor shirts, ankle long, and they had their hair cut. Each of them took four blankets and then they went back to the Birkenau camp. This continued for a while and of course we tried to prevent the SS men from seeing it and asking questions. The women were Hungarians, not yet involved in camp life, they were not



normally fed, that is, they were not receiving the regular food rations for eight to ten days by then, they were not given bread, occasionally some soup, they slept outdoors, or if they were lucky in a barrack with no blankets, without pallets, on the ground, in just a shirt. In the afternoon, another such group of some 2,000 women came, and the same thing happened again. Those women had it good, as there were a large number of women in the Birkenau camp who worked completely naked for three to four months, meanwhile, warehouses were filled with piles of clothes, underwear, shoes, everything. Only after some time, as the camp was next to a men's camp, did the women craft some coverings, pants, aprons out of the blankets the men threw to them, and worked like that. They died in terrible ways. It was in the summer and autumn months. One has to remember that the climate in Oświęcim is very harsh, especially in the mornings and evenings, even in the summer. If the days are rainy – and that happens often – then it is as cold in the summer as it normally is in the early spring.

**Prosecutor Pęchalski:** Did they have no clothes both in the day and in the night?

**Witness:** At all times – my colleague Wolken will provide the exact data.

**Prosecutor Pęchalski:** Where did they work?

**Witness:** In the fields – it was a large group of women.

**Prosecutor Pęchalski:** Do you have some sort of a map of Auschwitz or not?

**Witness:** I do not have a map, but it is easy to sketch one. Doctor Wolken has a map of Birkenau.

**Prosecutor Pęchalski:** Do you have any notes from your time in Auschwitz?

**Witness:** No, Doctor Wolken has them.

In late 1943 or early 1944, a scabies epidemic broke out in the women's camp. It is understandable, scabies is very infectious, one [prisoner] infects another. Generally innocuous. It's a skin disease, absolutely not dangerous and it can be cured within two, no more than four days, with an ointment or some sort of liquid. The medication used back then was mitigal. There was no mitigal in the camp, but there had to be order. The women were cured by sending some 9,000 to the gas because they had scabies. A month later we unloaded an entire rail car of mitigal, enough for a hundred times as many people.





In 1944, a *Zugang* arrived, and with it came one Sowa. He was a well-known killer... What is the name of that prison in Silesia, I cannot recall. He was the right hand of the boss of that prison for years, it was not far from us and he abused those people terribly. This Sowa arrived in the camp. The news spread like wildfire and for the first time in camp history the prisoners came together and started beating up Sowa in a *lager* (camp) street. He was being beaten and finding it very hard to defend himself, and then, no longer able to defend himself, he would most likely have been beaten to death on the spot if a *blokowy* had not come and taken him under his protection. He took him to the infirmary. The doctor there knew that if he took him in, the mood of the mob was so dangerous that they could smash the infirmary. He refused to take him in. A crowd of prisoners was standing in front of block 28, the way was closed. The only way open was towards the wires, and Sowa went for the wires. It was during the day, when the wires were not electrified. One of the SS men started shooting at him, he fired once, missed, fired again, missed, on the third try he hit him in the leg and only then did two SS men arrive and take him to block 11. That saved him. It was the first case of lynching in the camp. Shortly after, another one occurred. It was in 1944.

**Prosecutor Pęchalski:** In what capacity did Sowa arrive in the camp?

**Witness:** He came as a prisoner.

**Prosecutor Pęchalski:** You had murderers who would commit murders against you? No action was taken against them? You had people there who murdered you for months and there were no lynchings? What were the conditions that would lead you to commit lynchings? If a hospital had to account for the mood of the mob, that means the mob could do something.

**Witness:** I have already spoken about the mood in the camp. All the prisoners together and each of them individually were terrorized by the SS men, the *kapos* and the *blokowi*. It is understandable that no SS man would allow some *blokowy* or *kapo* to suffer even a scratch, for if one of them was beaten to death or killed, and an SS man did not react, the camp discipline would have suffered. Sowa was a *Homo novus* [new man]. He did not have the support of an armband and SS men. Therefore the SS men stood by and smiled, watching the fun. That was the reason why he could be beaten and others not. It was possible to take revenge, and events I have mentioned point to that. When transports left for Germany, many of those who murdered in the *lager* were finished off in the transports, as there was





no way to control what happened in a locked railcar. In 1943, large Aryan transports began, especially into the German interior. In 1944, those transports gained in frequency. They began to evacuate Jews from Auschwitz and Birkenau. As a result, by the end of 1944, the percentage of Aryans in Auschwitz was minimal.

On 17 January 1945, in the evening, our camp doctor, *Obersturmführer* [SS NCO] Dr Fischer arrived and ordered us to burn the entire archive. In our block, the archive was located in the attic, as was the main *Schreibstube* [office] of the hospital. He personally made sure that everything was burned. We carried piles of medical records and other documents in blankets and burned them. I was walking around with a colleague, who said: "You know, we are burning the Third Reich now" – and it really was like he said. In the evening of 18 January, the *lager* was evacuated. In the evening, some 12,000 men went with a transport, and Birkenau was evacuated on that same day. Only the sick, incapable of marching, and some volunteer doctors and nurses who agreed to stay with them, were left behind. It was unofficially, secretly announced that an hour after the transport departed the camp would be blown up, as there were sapper units there for that purpose. The next morning it turned out that there were still prisoners in the camp, including the *kommando* from the Union [Krupp] factory, a number of *blokowi*, *kapos* and so forth.

On Sunday, 20 January, the last group left, some couple hundred people and the *Lagerführer*. It was anarchy, the Germans were gone, the Russians were not there yet either. Every now and again we would see a German soldier, there was gunfire around us, and shots in the camp as well. Three days later, Kraus arrived with a few SS men, and shot five prisoners he encountered while he was there.

In the afternoon of Thursday, 25 January, some 80 Gestapo men with submachine guns entered the camp, they surrounded the camp and the *lager* [word incomprehensible], with orders saying: "Everyone is to leave and line up" – even the very ill were to be taken out so that we would be evacuated. The situation was completely clear. There were many patients in our block, what were we supposed to do with those seriously ill people? We resolved that we had to go to the *Kommandoführer* [work detail commander] and intervene on the behalf of the very sick. With great difficulty I made it to the exit gate, where the *Kommandoführer* was supposed to be, and I waited. Eventually he appeared. A man with a typical Gestapo face, I think everyone knows the type. I report and bring



up the matter of those seriously ill patients. Before I even started talking to him, a light vehicle rolled up, two Gestapo men jumped out of it, approached the *Kommandoführer*, whispered something. He waved his hand. I present the matter to him, he shouts: "That's up to me, get in line!" At that moment I knew the cause of the sick was lost, and so was mine. "Go to the line!" he shouted, and said to one of the Gestapo men: "Keep an eye on him, but immediately." On my way back, I came to that Gestapo man and I was thinking about how I could get back to the block and the patients. Because I had stayed there on evacuation day, many weak patients, who could still walk, were left alone, as wherever the doctor stayed, the patients did as well. "If the doctor can stay, we can stay with him," they would say. I approach the Gestapo man and I could tell from his face that he had not heard or did not understand the order, but I realized he had understood the word "immediately." I say to him: "The commandant told me to go back to the patients immediately." I took a chance, he believed me, and he let me go, and so through that lie I returned to the block, and five minutes later not a single Gestapo man was left in the camp, and people were standing in the street. They were gone, as if the earth had swallowed them up. Later on we learned that the last train was supposed to leave at 7 o'clock that day, but since the Russians were advancing very quickly, the train left not at 7, but at 5 o'clock. The same car that brought the Gestapo men brought a report that there was no time, that they had to flee.

On 26 January there was nothing. On Saturday, 27 January, the sounds of gunfire were coming closer, we knew the front was drawing near. The first Soviet soldiers entered the camp.

**Prosecutor Pęchalski:** What about the administration?

**Witness:** We took it over; on the first night, as soon as the SS men had left the camp, we broke open the warehouses and took food to the blocks. The warehouses were overstocked. They were abundant with everything we would not receive in our time of imprisonment: fats, butter, flour, sugar, honey, all kinds of canned food, groats. We cooked and fed the remaining patients and treated them during that time. Water caused the most problems. We were short on water, short on electricity, we had to carry water from the swimming pool. Every day we needed 4,000 liters just for the cooking. We had to wash people, clean the blocks. Toilets were one of the greatest difficulties. We solved these problems by finding a group of prisoners who were at our disposal and helped us work.



**Prosecutor:** In the first days of January, did you hear the news that the German front line was breaking up?

**Witness:** We had newspapers, and you could deduce what was going on from the newspapers.

**Prosecutor:** Did the Germans change their attitude towards you, did they become gentler?

**Witness:** They acted the same up until the last moment. 17 January was the last normal day in the camp. The prisoner count in the entire Auschwitz complex (as Auschwitz was made up of several dozen *lagers*) was 45,342 men, some 16,000 women, and 96 prisoners of war, Russian soldiers. The prisoners were numbered throughout the entire time, in total there were some 253,000 men and 110,000 women [with numbers]. There were several different series as well as numbers.

**Prosecutor Pęchalski:** So what was covered by the registration was less than half a million strong? What were the conditions for the prisoners who had not been registered?

**Witness:** I will get to that, I have it in my notes.

**Prosecutor Pęchalski:** It is known, after all, that several million went through Auschwitz.

**Witness:** According to our count – taking the minimum, as we would rather underestimate than overestimate – some six million people went through Auschwitz. I stress here that some went into the German interior – on the last day there were over 60,000 people remaining. After the evacuations on the last day, there were still 5,000 sick left in Auschwitz, Birkenau, and Monowitz, meaning that some 50,000 people went with the transport.

**Prosecutor Pęchalski:** Dr Mayer recently said that he could determine the number of murdered up to the end of 1944 to be five and a half million people. And there were also over a million murdered who arrived from Hungary in May, he effectively said that by his count the number of murdered was between six and a half to seven million. Are your estimates of six million not too low, Doctor? Are these suppositions, or are they based on hard data? Did you have access to the records office?

**Witness:** It is hard to talk about figures, we can only speak in estimates. One of our colleagues worked in the hospital, another in registration, and so on. One knew this, another



knew that. We counted, we balanced, we simply combined the data. So and so many went this month, then some *kapo* said that so and so many were burned, and the data was compared, and we constantly ran the numbers. Anyone doing those calculations arrived at roughly the same figure.

From 1943 onwards, and maybe even a little earlier, prisoners started forming various organizations. The work was very hard. In such conditions where people remained in a huge concentration it was difficult to keep something secret. There was no trust. People were too shut-in, too hungry, too tired, with too much death around them, too terrorized to organize. The beginnings were thus very difficult, but the work went on. We established contact with the partisans. We had contact between Auschwitz and Birkenau, where fraternal organizations operated. In 1943 we convinced all parties to come together. In late summer of 1944, an order came to maintain increased readiness and we waited, day after day, hour after hour, and at the last moment an order from the outside came to stand down, even though the day and time had already been appointed. The idea was that a strike upon the *lager* would come from outside, and then we would attack from the inside. But the order came to stand down and Auschwitz obeyed, Birkenau obeyed, only the *Sonderkommando* did not obey it and attacked. They blew up one crematorium, killed 18 SS men. Over 200 of them fell – only a few escaped. After some tests, it turned out that the powder they had used for the explosion came from the Union [factory], where the prisoners worked. An investigation found four women who had smuggled the powder and all of them were hanged. They were Jews – Polish, I believe, but I do not remember their names. In the beginning there were several organizations: communists, Jews, Poles, three or four groups that later united.

**Prosecutor Pęchalski:** What kind of weaponry did those organizations have?

**Witness:** Handguns and a few grenades.

**Prosecutor Pęchalski:** What amount?

**Witness:** I do not know exactly.

**Prosecutor Pęchalski:** What about the numbers in the organizations?

**Witness:** I do not know those either. I only know my segment, I know what happened around me.



**Prosecutor Pęchalski:** Later on, when you were to stand down, did you continue to organize, and when the Soviets advanced, did you not have some special orders to rise up? The situation was just asking for an uprising.

**Witness:** We knew the front was advancing, we did not know how far away it was, but the SS men did not know either. The authorities themselves did not know, three or four days after the camp evacuation some senior officer arrived with soldiers and was outraged to find that the SS men had run away too early. Another thing: large transports of prisoners were leaving and every few days [the organization] had to be rebuilt. There was no time for action, as everything we made they ruined through those transports.

Now for the crematorium and gassing in general.

As we all know, the camp was established in July of 1940. The first trial gassing took place in late autumn of 1941 in block 11. A hundred Poles and around 600 Russians, prisoners of war, were gassed on that occasion. In 1941, gassing was begun in Birkenau. There were two peasant houses there. One peasant was named Wiecha, I do not recall the name of the other right now. The families of those peasants were evacuated and the gassings were done in those houses. 500 a day in one, 800 in the other. After the gassing, the bodies were buried. In spring of 1942, the bodies decayed madly. The stench was terrible. The bodies were dug up and then doused in pits. The two houses were called crematorium I.

In spring of 1940, a small crematorium was built in Auschwitz, where people were gassed and burned.

According to my information, crematorium I consisted of the peasant houses, while II and III were purpose-built crematoria. They had ovens and gas chambers. The construction of crematoria II and III began before Himmler's visit to the camp. Himmler was in the camp in 1942. The crematoria were completed afterwards and the gassings started. Crematoria II and III had 16 retorts each. A retort is the part of the oven where the body is placed. Normally, every retort holds one dead body. The rule is to burn bodies in coffins, but in the camp bodies were not burnt in coffins, up to five bodies were put in one retort. A retort was a quadrangular opening, deep, around two meters long. Appropriately tall and wide where the coffin would normally go. They burned using gas from the generators, and the bodies were arranged so that there were always two so-called "Canadian bodies," meaning stout ones, and three "Muslims" on top.



**Chairman:** How long did the burning take?

**Witness:** Some 15 minutes. So, as I said, there were 16 retorts each in both the second and third crematorium, then two new crematoria were added, IV and V. They were modern crematoria, with eight retorts each, but burning more and faster than the old. We had 32 and 16 retorts there, so 48 total. In all of Germany outside of this camp there were 55 retorts. I stress: all of Germany, while Auschwitz alone had 48. A gas chamber could gas more people than the ovens could burn. The chamber was built in such a way that there was a bigger room, where there were nails in the walls for hanging clothes. That was where people undressed. The doors leading to the gas chamber proper had texts in all languages: "Baths and disinfection – please do not forget a towel and soap." There were also showerheads there, not functional, of course. In short, everything was calculated to mislead people. A chamber was made to hold some 3,000 people. The gas used for the gassing was called Zyklon-B. It was hydrogen cyanide with some mixture in the form of a powder which turned to gas at 27 degrees Celsius, so it had to be warmer than 27 degrees in the gas chamber. The chamber could not be heated, because people would not enter if it was too stuffy inside, so the people themselves had to get the heat to above 27 degrees. To that end it was not 3,000 people that were shoved inside, but 4,000 to 5,000. They were forced in by specially trained dogs. More than a dozen such dogs would be unleashed, they jumped at people, bit them, and in panic people crowded into the chamber, stomping over one another, trampling, just to get as far from those beasts as possible. Prisoners who worked in the *Sonderkommando* said, regarding the gassing, that at the far wall there were three or four layers of dead bodies, and on them stood people who were also dead, already gassed, but without room to fall over. This meant that before the gassing started, there were already plenty of dead bodies lying down, and others standing on them. Afterwards, devices were activated to pump the air out. There were four hollow support columns there, and a gas bomb was thrown into each from above. The bomb was a round, cylinder-shaped can, weighing 500 g. There was a window in the wall where the camp doctor stood, and once everything was prepared, he would say to his assistant, also an SS man: "Come on, feed it to them already." Then [the assistant] threw the cans in. Death followed, as the witnesses said, in three to eight minutes. Usually they waited for 20 minutes, after that mark the air was pumped out, fresh air was let in and the bodies were transported to the ovens. Before the burning, two more *kommandos* would go to work in there. One was the dentist *kommando*.



There were 40 dentists there, pulling gold teeth from the bodies. There was also a special oven, where the gold was melted into bars and sent to Berlin. The other *kommando* shaved the hair of the women, and the hair was later used to make mattresses. A commission working in Auschwitz found a large number of bags full of human hair.

**Member of parliament Boguszewska:** Were the mattresses taken to Germany?

**Witness:** Yes. The description I gave shows that in theory, an unlimited number [of people] could be gassed. It was not possible to burn an unlimited number, but the transports kept coming and they had to manage somehow. The solution used was to burn people in pits. There was also an interesting device there. When the bodies burned, the fat would liquefy and leak out. A pipe with small vats was made to collect the fat, and if a transport came with skinny people who burned poorly, the fat was added to make them burn better. In 1944, in May, June, July, August, and partly in September, large transports came from Hungary, and also from the Netherlands, Belgium, and France. 650,000 people arrived from Hungary alone and the machine started working day and night. Clouds of smoke billowed day and night. It was impossible to keep up. The transports kept standing there, one waited by the ramp, another by the sauna, while the third was being burned. At that point, people were burned in pits in droves. Because there was no time, children and the elderly were tossed into the fire alive, especially children. Instead of 12 minutes, the wait during the gassing was 5 minutes. Some people were still alive. They were burned all the same. On average, 15,000 to 20,000 were burned in a day. A friend who worked there told me that there was a record-breaking day when 26,000 people were burned in one day.

20 rail cars of Zyklon-B were brought to Auschwitz. It was made by a company called Dessau. To illustrate the incalculable number of people burned there, I will provide one figure: 400 crates of spectacles were shipped off from Auschwitz, each of them weighing 100 kg. I stress that the gas was stocked in one building near our camp. When the transports came, every day the necessary supply was taken to Birkenau. They carried it in a Red Cross ambulance.

In 1941, after some 60 Russian prisoners of war escaped, there were reprisals. Some were shot, others ran away, some survived somehow. At that point, the Russian prisoners of war were in a separate camp. As punishment, the entire camp of prisoners of war stood at roll call for the entire night, and then went to work during the day like normal. They stood





for three nights and worked for three days in a row, without food, in the cold. There were 300 dead during those three days, not counting those who developed various diseases and died from them soon afterwards.

Now, let us move on to the issue of block 11. The block was a prison within the camp. People who committed some transgressions, who did not abide by the camp orders, ended up there. Aside from that, it also housed civilians taken from freedom on the outside and waiting for trial. If something happened somewhere in the world outside, prisoners were taken to block 11, kept there for a time, and then shot as retribution. The bunker was also there, and for a long time, until some point around May of 1942, the *Strafkommando* lived there. The yard of block 11 was where a *rozwałka*, as it was called in camp language, was held – meaning shootings and hangings. There were *rozwałki* where streams of blood spilled out past the gates of the yard. The yard is enclosed by a red wall and there is a gate in the wall. The blood spilled past that gate into the street. If someone ended up in block 11, they would not return. In exceptional cases, prisoners from block 11 came back to camp. The attitude of other prisoners towards them was somewhat strange. People shied away from them, they were afraid of them, based on an assumption – partly unfounded, perhaps – that if someone got out of eleven, they were suspect. That fact testifies best as to what eleven was. In the back of the yard of block 11 was a red wall, covered with a concrete wall up to the mid-point of its height. On the concrete wall there was a layer of cork painted black, the so-called black wall. There were gallows on both sides. The people sentenced to death were brought either individually or in twos through the yard to the wall, and an SS man shot them from behind in the neck with a short rifle. Death was usually instant. Every convict was naked. The body was moved to the side and another pair was brought in. After the executions, there was always a quite sizeable pile of bodies.

**Chairman:** Were there no cases where the convicts struggled, did not want to go?

**Witness:** There were no such cases, as far as I know, and besides it is hard to say. We saw those people being led there, but only part of the way, that is, from the stairs up until midway to the wall. That was the part of the yard visible from the windows of our block. During a *rozwałka*, our block was ordered to cover the windows with blankets, but we could look through the blankets. I think in 1942, but I do not remember for sure, a larger group of Polish officers were taken to eleven.





**Prosecutor Pęchalski:** Was the group big?

**Witness:** Maybe 200-300 people, but I will not provide a figure, because I don't know exactly. When there were riots in a city, people who had come from those cities were called out, taken to block 11 and had a *rozwałka* done to them. There was an uprising attempt among the Polish officers, the group was made up of a few people. When an SS man entered their cell, they jumped at him, took his pistol, started shooting, but all the cells were locked, they failed to obtain more weapons, and so they were shot.

**Prosecutor Pęchalski:** Did the Soviet prisoners of war, or Polish officers, have the same prison clothes, or were they allowed to keep their uniforms?

**Witness:** Polish officers did not wear uniforms. The Soviet prisoners of war wore their uniforms. There was a number on the uniform, and on the back a cross in red paint. When the Russians were finished off, the prisoners also wore their uniforms. When I arrived in the camp, I too received a Russian summer uniform of this kind. After something was worn out, it was replaced, and the Russian jackets also disappeared eventually.

**Prosecutor Pęchalski:** Where did the group of Polish officers come from?

**Witness:** I don't know exactly, but it seems to me the group was assembled from other *lagers* they were kept in. Immediately after a *rozwałka*, a car would arrive. It was a special car, the kind meat is transported in, covered on the top. The bodies were loaded into it and taken to the crematorium. It was done by the nurses and doctors. In 1943, I too was sent by the *blokowy* to load corpses. We stood almost up to our ankles in blood, our entire arms were covered with it as well, as the bodies were still warm. There were few corpses that time, only around 80, including one woman. The loading was performed by having two people stand in front of the car, grabbing the dead body by the arms and legs, swinging it and tossing it into the car. We loaded up half of it and suddenly a head rises up in the pile of corpses and starts moving. One of the prisoners working in block 11 speaks up and says that this man is still alive. Then an SS man takes a carbine, puts the barrel to the man's eye and fires. An older doctor recoiled. Seeing this, the SS man says: "What, have you never seen blood?" We thought we would have one more corpse, but luckily another SS man started laughing at the scene and so the doctor avoided death.

Before a *rozwałka*, the so-called *Sondergericht* [special trial] was held. Two or three officers from Auschwitz came and conducted a trial for an hour or two. Usually some 200-



300 cases were resolved in that time. Typically around 90 percent were sentenced to death. The exceptions were sent to the camp as punishment, sometimes people were even set free. By 1944, there were no more *rozwałki* in block 11, prisoners would be taken to Birkenau and gassed or shot there. Sometimes they were moved in special cars, big enough for 15-30 people, and gassed in those cars.

Block 11 often had a "payday" [*wypłata*], that is, a flogging. Sometimes it was done publicly during roll call, but more usually in eleven. A prisoner was placed on a special pommel horse so that they could not move – two [people] stood beside it and flogged them. The flogging was done with clubs, usually one got 25 lashes, typically the camp doctor was present to assert that the prisoner was strong and hale enough to survive 25 lashes. There must be order – German order.

In block 11 there was the so-called *Stehbunker* [standing bunker], some 175-180 cm high, 2 meters long, 75 cm wide. Five people would be put in that bunker. The bunker did not have a window and had airtight doors. The prisoners would spend the entire night there as punishment, that is, from eight p.m. until the morning gong, meaning nine hours on average. There was not enough air for five people, so by morning two or three were found asphyxiated. There were even cases, particularly if there was a *kapo* among the prisoners, where they would strangle two or three right in the beginning in order to survive. In 1944, the *Stehbunker* was abolished. There was also the *Wasserbunker* [water bunker]. The water there was 20-30 cm deep, and a prisoner would be sentenced to two, three days in this bunker completely naked. It was rare for anyone to survive three days.

Interestingly, block 11 was the site of the so-called freedom quarantine. As we know, there were singular cases of prisoners being released from Auschwitz. Before their release, they had to spend three, four weeks in quarantine. So that was block 11 – the bloodiest block of people sentenced to death, along with people marked for release. A small picture of German cynicism.

No less interesting was the Auschwitz Institute of Hygiene. This was a large compound. It contained instruments of significant value. 150 prisoners worked there, mostly specialists. Various experiments were performed there. Most of the work had absolutely no scientific value. The point was that Dr Weber had a lot of back-room support and was dodging going to the front, so he tried to distinguish himself with scientific work. There were constant



drawings of blood and various trials. Once, 60,000 stool samples were taken from prisoners. The *kapo* of the institute, who was the chief of the office, a political prisoner, had been in this and in other camps for six or seven years – he was a most decent man. He tried to help the prisoners by expanding that *kommando* as much as possible so that as many prisoners as possible had light, indoor work. When some project was to be finished and graphs were to be made, they were not drawn up by a doctor or chemist, but by the office manpower. Such were the pseudoscientific works of the Hygiene Institute. If a blood test were actually done and it turned out that two samples were taken from the same man by mistake, the results could be entirely different in both cases.

The experiments performed on the prisoners were not limited to such innocuous games as taking blood or stool samples. Other experiments were also performed. In 1944, for the first time, some 30 young and strong prisoners were taken to block 28. The windows were covered up, the doors locked. No one was allowed to enter, there was only one nurse, and the procedure was performed by an SS doctor. He would inject kerosene under the patient's skin. Naturally, tissue necrosis followed. The tissue was partially cut out and sent to be examined under a microscope. Everyone was left with a wound, but very many also developed serious phlegmons, abscesses on their entire shins and thighs, so the sick were sent afterwards to our block for treatment. I still have one of these patients in my block today, I believe I have shown him to you. The wound on one shin has healed, but there is a clearly outlined rectangular scar, four by eight centimeters large, where the tissue was cut out. The wound on the other shin has not healed yet, even though it has already been six months since the surgery.

There was an x-ray machine in Birkenau, where men were sterilized for experimental purposes. It was done by non-professionals, although the x-ray was operated by an SS doctor, who often used an excessive dosage. As a result, prisoners developed burns not only on the scrotum, but also on the thighs. Huge, slow healing wounds developed as a result, and most of those people would go to the gas after the first procedure. Those who survived the irradiation were sent to block 21 and castrated. Normally, people were castrated three months after the irradiation had caused complete sterility. Some were partially castrated and then completely castrated after another three months. Others were castrated immediately. Castrations were performed within 20–30 days. The prisoners were castrated by Dr Dering. Aside from that, there was a special women's block in Auschwitz –



number 10 – where on average 400 women were held for experiments. The experiments focused on cancer, especially cervical cancer. And again, sterilization of women and castration, abdominal operations with castration. That block was managed by Dr Clauberg from Koenigsberg.

**Chairman:** In Katowice it was said that he came from Chorzów.

**Witness:** He lived there, but he supposedly came from Koenigsberg. It is hard to say for certain, I am sure of his name, but not his place of origin. Operations on women were also performed by Dr Dering. The head doctor of block 10 was Dr Samuel from Cologne, who was eventually done in by the SS men themselves because he knew too much and had seen too much. One time in block 12, the patients were injected with something – I don't know what – and they died within a few hours. New medications were sent there for trials, including a compound called B 1034. It was a sulfamide, similar to prontosil, used to treat erysipelas. After an autopsy, it turned out that all the internal organs were a red color and the liver had deteriorated.

One time, the camp doctor called two doctors, three nurses, and I believe two patients as well, six or seven people in total, to block 21. Each of them was injected, they waited for around half an hour, then an interrogation of those people began. I shall describe the scene in the words of my colleague who told me about it. "I enter the room," he said, "where a doctor sits and another SS man too, and some civilian. The civilian starts questioning me, what was I in for, what did I do. A flurry of questions. At some point he pulls out a revolver, puts it to my temple, and says: 'I will shoot you.' It went on for some ten minutes. I told the next man about it immediately after leaving. The next nurse, knowing what was going to happen, was calmer, he started acting smart, even joking, assuming he could afford to because he had been given some sort of injection. When the revolver was put to his temple, and he was then asked: 'You were afraid when I put the revolver to your head?' he answered: 'No, because I don't believe you will shoot me here.' I say all this because from the various sentences exchanged with the gentlemen there I realized that it was supposed to be a serum to extract [information] from people, because these methods were designed to break people's will, and then a man was supposed to answer all questions. Of course, it was an utter failure."

I also wanted to mention the sexual life. I have already spoken about the brothel in Auschwitz. One has to remember that most *kapos*, especially Germans – I observed this



especially in Germans, as they were people who had been kept in jail for 10, 15, 20 years, who had a dozen or more sentences each, and so were separated from women for most of their lives – they were almost exclusively homosexuals. Each of them was wealthy in *lager* terms. He had enough food and clothing and could afford to keep a lover. Her part was played by young boys who were in the camp. A warped young boy, given the chance at a good life without work, called a “*ripel*” [*pipel*], was there to cook lunch for the *kapo* – illegally, of course, because it was not allowed – to wash his underwear, to make his bed and so on, and first and foremost he was his lover. It was one of the very sad chapters of camp life, as few children were left alive, and most were completely warped. I stress that officially homosexuality was strictly forbidden. If such a *kapo* was caught by chance, he was castrated as a punishment and drafted into the *Strafkommando*. Interestingly, as I have already noted, 90 percent of cases of this perversion developed in Germans.

**Prosecutor Pęchalski:** These were not isolated cases, if all of you knew it – the *kapos*’ superiors must also have known it. Why did they not immediately put an end to it? Could it not be because such an SS man also had this kind of morality?

**Witness:** Partly, yes. There had to be an official report, presented either by the *pipel* or by someone who saw it. A *pipel* obviously would not do it, and a third party would not have the courage. Moreover, such a report could end up with an SS man who was himself guilty of that. I know of such a case. A *kapo* wanted to rape a little boy, who started to run, cry, he came across a *blokowy* who noticed the crying boy, asked him why he was crying, finally got it out of him and took him to the appropriate authorities, where the report could not disappear and the case moved forward.

I would also like to mention a few other matters. As I said, on 18 January the large transports left and an evacuation was carried out. 58,000 men and women left the camp. A few transports departed. These large transports carried 10,000 to 18,000 people. Three weeks later, a few prisoners from those transports arrived in the camp and they told us of the fate of those transports. Along the way, every person who was weaker and could not endure that march, on foot in the middle of winter, was shot on the spot. They walked on foot, then they were loaded into rail cars, then they marched on foot again and eventually were rounded up in a field between two forests, and everyone was finished off with machine guns and hand grenades. Two hid in a hay bale, and although there were searches later, they were not found.



A few bolted for the forest. Only a handful of individuals survived. I believe there were even testimonies written down by them.

In one of the *lagers*, named Fürstengrube, there was an evacuation of healthy people. The SS men set fire to the hospital, surrounded it with gunners, and anyone who tried to save themselves – they shot at them and threw hand grenades. One former prisoner arrived this week. He reported to me that he was a survivor of Fürstengrube. He was shot through the arm, and he has wounds on his head from the ceiling collapsing above him. Only a few of them survived. Very few. I have a report from an eyewitness, Dr Erlich from Czechoslovakia.

Not only were the floggings of prisoners in the camp public, but also the hangings. Already in the afternoon the gallows would be set up in front of the kitchen, and after the evening roll call, when the entire camp was standing there, the convicts were brought out and hanged.

**Prosecutor Pęchalski:** The gallows were not permanent?

**Witness:** No. A few separate gallows were set up near block 11. One time, 12 prisoners were hanged. They were hanged around 6.30 p.m. At 3 a.m. the London radio reported that 12 prisoners had been hanged that evening in the Auschwitz camp. The SS men were terribly unnerved and started to search. Whole crowds of snitches (spies) were unleashed and nothing was found, even though the prisoners had a radio transmitter. It was hidden in block 11. In late 1944, five prisoners were publicly hanged for escaping – two Poles and three Germans. All had the red *winkle* [triangles], the type worn by [political] prisoners. For the first time, before being hanged, the convicted did not keep silent before the hanging, but shouted: “Long live Poland! Long live Soviet Russia! Long live socialism! Down with the brown terror! Down with the SS dogs!” As a result, they were beaten, as the crowd was starting to become agitated. They were beaten, hanged, and the judgment was read after the hanging. They were convicted for preparing an escape. They were people from our organization, who were supposed to escape and make final preparations for cooperation between the partisans and us.

Escapes happened from time to time. Sometimes individuals, sometimes in groups of two or three. In most cases the prisoners were caught. They failed. They would be caught even after two years and brought back to the camp. Originally, the punishment was hanging. Every tenth man of the *kommando* was taken and shot. Then there was a period when there were no hangings, prisoners were flogged instead, and after a large wave of escapes



the hangings were brought back. One of my colleagues, a nurse, escaped, but he prepared his escape poorly. After 12 hours, he was caught outside of the camp and brought back. We had contact with block 11, where he was. We sent him packages and received letters from him. He wrote in one letter: "I ran away, I was free for a few hours – I kissed that free land – they caught me, but it was worth it to run away. Escape if you can, even for a few hours of freedom." The letters were written on red tissue paper, barely readable. They were passed around. He was a Pole from Kraków. He was not hanged (it was the period when they were not hanging), he was flogged and sent in a transport deep into Germany.

**Chairman:** He was not sent to the gas?

**Witness:** No. I remember another escape of people from our organization, an escape that was exceptionally well prepared and also failed. An SS man was bribed, another had a car with a false bottom, but unfortunately, the driver betrayed us at the last moment. When they were brought out of block 11, two of them swallowed poison. They were scared of being interrogated and betraying others. Three of them survived, but they exposed no one. And one more escape. I mention it because the man is still living. He was a prisoner from the first transport, Leszek, a man whose testimony will be very valuable. His number was 680, I believe. He escaped, hid for three months, and after the Russians came, on his way home, he met up with us. He is still alive.

**Doctor Mayer (interrupts):** His name is Piworotor, from Rzeszów. He was in the camp from day one.

**Witness:** I have to mention another camp, not related to Auschwitz, but with a unique trait. Near Bereza Kartuska lay Bronna Góra. A camp was set up there, people were brought in, transports arrived around 2 a.m. – 4 a.m. People disembarked and were immediately sorted out. Women separate, men separate, children five year old or younger separate, 5 to 12 years old separate. There was a large field there, sloped upwards, ditches one hundred meters long, two meters wide, four to five meters deep. People had to strip naked, and then they were laid out, alive: a layer of men, a layer of women on top of them, they had grenades thrown at them, they were shot with machine guns, there were living and dead, they were covered with chlorine, then another layer of men, another layer of women, and covering with chlorine again and so on. Children up to the age of 5 were either grabbed by the legs and had their heads smashed against rocks, or, more typically, thrown into the air and used as shooting





targets. Children between 5 and 12 were chased up a hill and used as target practice. The fun ended around noon. Fewer people died in that camp than in Auschwitz, but in a way so characteristic of the Germans.

**Prosecutor Pęchalski:** Presumably you know this from someone else, you were not there?

**Witness:** From a colleague who spoke to an eyewitness. I would be able to provide figures, as the colleague is probably still there. The German SS man wanted to finish them off, exterminate everyone, destroy, because only Germans are people, in his view, and only Germans have the right to live – and what have we seen? We have seen one thing: that that terrible hatred, that sea of blood, bred even more hate, not just among the Germans. This sowing of hate yielded and continues to yield a terrible crop. Terrible and very bountiful, and it is, and will be, permanently and constantly, the revenge of Hitler and his thugs from beyond the grave. There is so much hate that we hate not only the SS man, we hate each other, not only German blood is spilled, but also the blood of others is spilled. That hate will yield another crop, more hate. And we find ourselves still and we will continue to find ourselves in a vicious cycle without a way out. If we do not rise to breaking that cycle of hate, if we do not present a great mass of love, we will become like them and we will die like them.

**Chairman:** Thank you, doctor, for casting light on the events – and perhaps you have questions for the doctor? Please present them for the doctor to explain.

**Member of parliament Kornacki:** You have provided a very high number of Auschwitz victims, doctor. What is it based on? As to the numbered prisoners, there were 360,000 of them, while the victims of Auschwitz are estimated at six to seven million. We would like to know what those numbers are based on. What method led to this kind of estimate – that would be the first question.

**Witness:** I repeat. According to the data of the record office, which we had access to, the count of numbered prisoners was around 360,000 people. This can be calculated precisely. It is irrelevant, as the next witness has the exact citations from the record office. As for the figure of six to seven, or five and a half million, I have already said that number arose from the conversations, correlations, from what someone told someone else, or heard in testimony, or from the tales of a *kapo* who worked in the *Sonderkommando*. The numbers also partly come from the testimony of railway workers, who know how many





transports arrived, how many people were in a rail car and so on. From what the rail workers testified, in 1943 and 1944 alone (I consider this estimate too high) up to five million people must have arrived, that was what the railway officials testified before the Soviet commission. When a part of the people from almost a majority of the transports, but not all of them, arrived in the camp, they were asked: "How many of you were there?" and they answered. We calculated that around ten percent entered the camp. If we take the figure of 360,000 people numbered in the camp, and multiply it by ten, we arrive at three and three quarters of a million. We also have to add to this the transports from which no one was taken to the camp, so if we approach it from this position, we arrive at the figure of between five and a half to six million. Wherever we begin, we arrive at the same figure.

**Prosecutor Pęchalski:** Do you have any idea, within those five or six million, how many corresponded to each state and nationality? I heard that there were 600,000 Hungarians, another time that there were a million of them. Could we learn something about that?

**Witness:** I can provide some numbers we are more or less sure of. 650,000 from Hungary in 1944, 690,000 from France in 1944 alone, 70,000 from Łódź in 1944 alone, 40,000 from Będzin in August of 1944, 30,000 from Teresin in October of 1944, 50,000 from Thessalonica, and 100,000 from Athens. Prof. Dawidowski can provide more such data.

**Prosecutor Pęchalski:** Were there no transports from Romania?

**Witness:** There were domestic camps in Romania.

**Prosecutor Pęchalski:** Doctor, how did you obtain the information that during a certain period an SS man was paid 60 Reichsmarks for each kill?

**Witness:** In 1942, I worked at digging foundations in Buna, and then we were taken to the so-called *Tiefbau*, that is, building foundations for factory halls. You make a hole 16 meters deep, one meter across, and fill it with concrete as a foundation for factory halls. An electric-powered machine does that work, and each such machine had a civilian qualified technician working on it alongside four prisoners. I also worked with one such machine. The technician I worked under was a German airman on work leave. He was a little crazy. I even remember that when we were going to work, the *kapo* warned us to be careful, as working with him was difficult (the *kapo* warned us against the technician, that is). At some point the technician looks at me and says: "Why are you struggling, you will not make it out of here alive, you



have to die. You know, I will shoot you, you will spare yourself the hardship, and I will get 60 Reichsmarks as a reward." There were also prisoners who worked in the homes of the higher-ranking SS men and could look into various papers or heard the SS men discussing it.

**Prosecutor Pęchalski:** Did you see the liquidation of the transport of 600 children yourself, doctor?

**Witness:** I did not see it myself, much as I did not see the two transports from Theresienstadt to Birkenau arriving. No one was gassed. The children and the elderly entered the camp and lived there for a few months. There were, I believe, around 6,000 of them there. One day, half of them were taken away and gassed, soon after the other half was gassed as well. I did not see it, but it is a fact.

**Member of parliament Boguszewska:** What was the fate of newborns?

**Witness:** I have never been to the women's camp, so I cannot say anything about this, my colleagues who know the subject better will [testify] here. A female colleague of mine, who is in Kraków, was there and she will speak about it accurately. I can say what I have heard from an eyewitness, a woman. The children were given no food and a child normally died from hunger in two or three days. Giving birth to babies was forbidden. Both the babies and the mothers went to the gas.

**Chairman:** We have visited Auschwitz and we have seen a photograph of a woman from Silesia who was said to have given birth in the camp. She had an almost two-year-old child in her arms. It was well off.

**Witness:** I know what you are talking about, but it was a six-month-old baby.

**Chairman:** It was definitely older.

**Witness (looking at the photograph):** Yes, this is a six-month-old child. The woman in the photograph did not have a number, for she was not a prisoner yet, but just a *Polizei Häftling* [police prisoner], meaning she had been charged, she was sent to block 11 and she was locked in the bunker on the ground floor. She was expecting and before the birth she was sent to the hospital in Birkenau. She gave birth there and was then sent back to block 11. When a transport went west, she did not go and thus saved the lives of both herself and the child. The last gassing was done in October of 1944. After that date, a transport for the gas



arrived, which included children from Slovakia, by mistake, because they had not known that gassing was no longer being done, and they were all left alive. Aside from that, there were also the *Zwilings*, that is, twins.

There was one Dr Mengele, a *Lagerarzt*, who was writing a scientific thesis entitled "Twins." Whenever a transport arrived, they went there and asked if there were any twins in it, and small children or adults, if they were twins, went to the camp, even if the entire transport went to the gas. If someone informed [the people in the transport] about it, twins were quickly arranged: a boy and a girl were taken, given the same age and a shared name, and they were presented as twins and went to the camp.

There were two children among them – twins. I asked one: "How old are you?" "Ten," "And you?" "Ten." After two days they realized they were not in danger and they told the truth. One was eight, the other ten years old. They were not even from the same family; Dr Mengele worked and wrote scientific theses based on that.

[I will] also [provide] a few names of the *Lagerarzts* and a few more well-known killers, we wrote them down one day, the ones we all remember.

*Lagerkommendant Sturmbannführer*: Höß, Liebehenschel, Baer, Kraus (from Lublin).

*Lagerleiter Hauptsturmführer*: Aumayer [Aumeier], Schwarz.

*Obersturmführer*: Hoffmann, Hesser [Hössler], Seal [Sell] (*Arbeitseinsatz*), Josten, *Leiter der SS-Zentralbauleitung Sturmbannführer* Bischof.

*Obersturmbannführer*: Jotan [Jothann] (first deputy), Egelin [Eggeling] (second deputy), *Leiter der Landwirtschaft Sturmbannführer* Caesar.

*Lagerarzt*: Dr Entress, Dr Tilo [Thilo], Dr Klein, Dr Fischer, Prof. Clauberg, Dr Mengele, Dr König, Dr Rode [Rohde], Dr Kitt, Dr Helmersen.

*Rapportführer*: Palitsch [Palitzsch], Stiebitz, Klausen [Claussen], Hartwig, Kaduk, Sommerer; SDG [*Sanitätsdienstgrade*] nurse assistants: Klehr, Niedźwiecki.

Chief of the bread warehouse: Schuhmacher [Schumacher] (Düsseldorf).

Block 11: Schlager [Schlage], Schulz (the SS man in charge of the bunker).



From the political [department]: Lachman [Lachmann], Bogger [Boger].

I recall a moment when a *Lagerarzt* was performing a selection. All the sick who could walk got up and paraded in front of him. He sorted them out. He was then supposed to examine all the patients in beds, he walked between the beds and wanted to sort them out, suddenly he said: "I want each of them to have a postcard in hand," then he lost patience and said "Everyone". "Master" Rohde did not have the patience to wait two minutes. Or one of the *Rapportführers*, Palitzsch, who shot the most people in block 11. When Palitzsch arrived on a bicycle with a carbine on his back, we knew there would be shooting. One time, drunk, he bragged that he had shot 25,000 people. A worthy competitor for him was Stiebitz [Stiewitz]. He was assisted by Claussen. Kaduk earned a special distinction. He was hated in the camp like few were, he was always drunk, he was from Silesia, I believe. He walked around the camp, gathered a group of people, tortured them for fun, carried out searches – he wanted to earn a little. If he did not find anything, he would beat people.

There were 18,000 Gypsies – only one is left. All were gassed after a long time in the camp. Before the gassing, the Gypsies were brought to our camp and placed in blocks 8, 9, and 10, where they lived. They were a rowdy little company. One time, a *Lagerspera* was ordered and it went on for a while. Men, women, and children were entering the blocks, and before all of them had gone inside, Kaduk appeared. "What, not everyone is inside yet?" He pulls out a revolver and shoots into the crowd. He was drunk. Only one bullet hit a target – it ricocheted and hit a Gypsy man in the belly. Kaduk loved shooting in the *lager* streets. One time, he came to the cinema and ordered us to watch a film for half an hour while squatting. But these were tiny games. One cannot forget Sell. He had the so-called *Arbeitseinsatz*, he was in charge of making sure work in camp was efficient – ever more so; he performed the selections and sent people to the gas without orders from Berlin. Particularly notorious were Lach and Bogger from the Political Department. They tortured people during the interrogations, they sent very, very many people to death.

At this, the hearing of the witness on 14 April 1945 was concluded.

After reading a translation of the record, the witness stated as follows: The present protocol is a faithful rendition of the contents and sense of my testimony, it therefore corresponds with my intent, and I sign it personally as proof of that.